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THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE,

FROM THE

ACCESSION OF HENRY THE THIRD,

IN 1574,

TO THE

DEATH OF HENRY THE FOURTH,

IN 1610.

PRECEDED BY

A VIEW OF THE CIVIL, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE,

BETWEEN THE MIDDLE, AND THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY;

AND FOLLOWED BY

A VIEW OF THE STATE OF EUROPE

AT THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

By Sir N. WILL^M. WRAXALL, Bart.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The Reign of HENRY THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

REVIEW of the French history, from the death of Francis the First, to that of Charles the Ninth. — Aspect of France, at the latter period. — Situation of the court, the capital, and the provinces, in 1574. *— Regency and measures of Catherine of Medicis. — Execution of Montgomery. — Flight of Henry the Third from Poland. — His reception at Vienna, Venice, and Turin. — Affairs of France. — Journey of the court to Lyons. — Political intrigues at Turin. — Return of Henry, and his entry into France.* - - *Page* 1

CHAP. II.

Condition of the kingdom, and of parties, at Henry's assumption of the government. — Continuation of the war against the Protestants. — Restitution of Pignerol, Savillan, and Perouse, to Savoy. — Journey of the court

to Avignon. — Death of the Cardinal of Lorrain. — Inauguration and marriage of the King. — Capture and execution of Montbrun. — Inactivity and vices of Henry. — Escape of the Duke of Alenson. — Defeat of Thoré. — Truce with Alenson. — Entry of the German army into France. — Flight of the King of Navarre. — Negotiation, and conclusion of peace. — Foreign affairs. — State of Flanders. — Election of Stephen Battori to the crown of Poland. — Death of the Emperor Maximilian the Second. — Aspect of Europe. Page 37

CHAP. III.

Origin, formation, and principles of "the League." — Assembly of the States-General at Blois. — Henry declares himself the chief of "the League." — Renewal of the war with the Protestants. — Peace. — Edict of Poitiers. — Conduct of the King. — State of the court. — Expedition to Morocco, and death of Sebastian, King of Portugal. — Affairs of the Netherlands. — Duke of Anjou is called to the assistance of the Flemings. — Death of Don John of Austria. — Internal concerns of France. — Recommencement of the civil war. — Causes by which it was produced. — Ill success of the Hugonots. — Conclusion of peace. — Affairs of the Low-Countries. — Exploits of the Prince of Parma. — Treaty made by the States of Flanders, with the Duke of Anjou. — Death of Henry, King of Portugal. — Conquest of that kingdom by Philip the Second. — Death, and character of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. - - - - - 67

CHAP. IV.

Internal state of France. — Profusion and mal-administration of the King. — Entry of the Duke of Anjou into

into the Netherlands. — His first exploits. — He passes over into England. — Submission of Portugal to Philip the Second. — The islands of the Azores adhere to Anthony. — Return of the Duke of Anjou to Flanders. — Attempt to assassinate the Prince of Orange by Jaureguy. — Conspiracy of Salcede. — Naval expedition to the Azores. — Defeat of Strozzi. — Operations in the Low-Countries. — Attempt of the Duke of Anjou upon Antwerp. — Consequences of it. — Retreat of that prince into France. — Indolence, and vices of Henry. — Institution of the order of the Penitents. — Symptoms of an insurrection in France. — Second enterprize against the Azores. — Progress of the Prince of Parma in Flanders. — Death of the Duke of Anjou. — Assassination and character of William, Prince of Orange.
Page 117

CHAP. V.

State of France at the time of the Duke of Anjou's death. — Ineffectual attempt of Henry to induce the King of Navarre to renounce his religion. — Preparations of Henry, Duke of Guise for taking up arms. — Support given by Catherine of Medicis, to his ambitious projects. — Irresolution of Henry. — Treaty of Joinville. — Sovereignty of the Low-Countries offered to the King of France. — Rejected by him. — First enterprizes of "the League." — Timidity of the King. — Treaty of Nemours. — War declared against the Protestants. — Manifesto of the King of Navarre. — Junction of the Protestants with Montmorenci. — Accession of Pope Sixtus the Fifth. — He excommunicates the King of Navarre. — Reply of that prince. — Commencement and progress of hostilities. — Unsuccessful attempt of the Prince of Condé on Angers. — Affairs of the Low-Countries. — Surrender of Antwerp. — Queen of England accepts the protection of the Dutch. - 163

CHAP. VI.

Letters addressed by the King of Navarre, to the different orders of the kingdom. — Campaign in Guienne and Poitou. — Conduct of Henry. — His journey to Lyons. — Audience and answer given by him, to the German embassy. — Operations of the Duke of Guise. — Conference of St. Brix. — State of Paris. — Machinations of "the League." — Henry disconcerts them. — Success of Joyeuse. — Entrance of the Germans and Switzers into Lorrain. — Inactivity of the King. — Duke of Guise defends France. — Battle of Coutras. — Progress of the foreign army. — Defeat of Vimory. — Second defeat, at Auneau. — Flight of the Germans and Switzers. — Treaty concluded with them by Henry. — Exploits and personal glory of the Duke of Guise. — Return of the King to Paris. — Foreign affairs.

Page 204

CHAP. VII.

State of France after the defeat of the Germans. — Proceedings of the Princes of Lorrain. — Death of the Prince of Conde. — Conspiracies against Henry. — Arrival of the Duke of Guise at Paris. — Insurrection. — Flight of the King. — Negotiations. — Treaty between Henry and the Duke of Guise. — Convocation of the States-General of France at Blois. — Henry determines to assassinate the Duke of Guise. — Measures adopted for its execution. — Assassination of the Duke and Cardinal of Guise. - - - 247

CHAP. VIII.

Inactivity of the King, after the death of the Guises. — Emotions excited by that event at Paris. — Death of Catherine

Catherine of Medicis. — Rebellion. — Violent acts committed by the Parisians. — Duke of Mayenne is constituted chief of "the League." — Revolt of the principal cities of France. — Desperate situation of Henry. — Conduct of the King of Navarre. — Truce between him and Henry. — Excommunication of the King. — Interview of Plessiz les Tours. — Attack of Tours by Mayenne. — Operations of the war. — Vigorous exertions of the King. — He marches to Paris. — Critical position of the affairs of "the League." — Assassination of Henry. — His death. — Character. — General Reflexions. - - - - - 279

THE

THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE REIGN OF HENRY THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

Review of the French History, from the death of Francis the First, to that of Charles the Ninth.—Aspect of France at the latter period.—Situation of the court, the capital, and the provinces, in 1574.*—Regency and measures of Catherine of Medicis.—Execution of Montgomery.—Flight of Henry the Third from Poland.—His reception at Vienna, Venice, and Turin.—Affairs of France.—Journey of the court to Lyons.—Political intrigues at Turin.—Return of Henry, and his entry into France.*

THE French monarchy, from the period of the expulsion of the English under Charles the Seventh, and the subsequent re-union of the great fiefs to the crown, continued to be for near a century,

CHAP. I.

CHAP. I.

tury, in a state of constant progression and advancement. The successful irruptions of Charles the Eighth, and of Louis the Twelfth, into Italy; and the conquests made by those princes beyond the Alps, however transitory they proved, yet evinced how formidable France might soon become to the repose of Europe. Francis the First, with inferior forces, nevertheless maintained a long and almost perpetual conflict, during his whole reign, against the head of the German empire, supported by the veteran bands of Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. The compact and collected nature of his dominions; their happy position, in the centre of his enemy's possessions, which France completely intersected; and the facility with which, from the extent of his prerogative, he could draw pecuniary supplies from his subjects;—these circumstances enabled him to balance, and even to limit, the unwieldly greatness of the house of Austria. Notwithstanding the memorable defeat of Pavia, and the numerous disgraces or calamities experienced at various times, during the course of his reign, which were principally owing to his negligence, profusion, or misconduct; he left the kingdom at his decease, rich, flourishing, and capable of the greatest external exertions.[a]

State of France, under Francis the First.

1547.

1552. Reign of Henry the Second.

The eastern frontier was extended and strengthened under his successor, Henry the Second, on its most vulnerable quarter, by the acquisition of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, dis-

[a] Mezerai, passim.

membered

membered from the German empire; and their capture was rendered peculiarly memorable by the siege which Francis, Duke of Guise, sustained against the Emperor Charles the Fifth in person. The victory of St. Quintin, where the Constable Montmorenci, with the flower of the French nobility, fell into the hands of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy; and which success, if it had been improved, might have subverted the monarchy of France itself; was in a great measure rendered ineffectual by the procrastination, delays, and inaptitude of Philip the Second for conducting military affairs. The prompt recal of the Duke of Guise from Italy, not only dissipated the general consternation; but diffused universal satisfaction, by the vigorous and successful attack of Calais, which the incapacity or negligence of Mary, Queen of England, had exposed to danger. That valuable conquest was retained by Henry, at the final treaty of peace, which soon afterwards took place between the two crowns of France and Spain. Nor was even the evacuation and restitution of Savoy and Piedmont, so long occupied by the French arms, which constituted a prominent article of the treaty, wholly unaccompanied with advantage; as it precluded a renewal of the ruinous and expensive expeditions for the recovery of Naples and the Milanese, which during more than sixty years, from the reign of Charles the Eighth, down to that of Henry the Second, had impoverished and exhausted the kingdom.[b]

1553.

1557.

1558. January.

1559. January.

[b] De Thou, Mezerai, passim.

CHAP. I.

July. Accession of Francis the Second.

The premature and tragical death of Henry, one of the most extraordinary events of modern times, which happened in the midst of the festivities consequent on the termination of the war, by a splinter from the Count of Montgomery's lance, may be regarded as the æra from whence we date the calamities of France. His son and successor, Francis the Second, though he had passed the age at which the French monarchs were declared by the edict of Charles the Fifth, to be no longer in their minority; was from his inexperience, as well as from the very limited nature of his capacity, unequal to conducting in person the machine of government. Under these circumstances, the administration was rather assumed by, than delegated to, the Duke of Guise, and his brother the Cardinal of Lorrain; whose proximity of blood to Mary Stuart, the young Queen of France and Scotland, when sustained by their talents, ambition, and enterprize, enabled them to surmount all opposition. The unpopularity of their general measures; their descent from, and their alliance with the house of Lorrain, which family might justly be regarded as foreign, if not hostile to the French interests; and more than either reason, the intemperate and persecuting spirit manifested by them towards the followers of the reformed religion, who were numerous and powerful; — these combined causes, operating on minds already heated by controversy, produced the famous explosion, denominated the conspiracy of Amboise.

Its

CHAP. I.

Its object was in some degree equivocal and unascertained: but the Guises, naturally confounding any attempt to subvert their own authority, with the crime of treason, severely punished its authors; and displayed the full extent of royal, as well as ministerial vengeance, in the executions which followed its discovery. Intoxicated with prosperity, and stimulated by motives of personal safety, they determined to prosecute with equal rigour, the concealed abettors of the enterprize, as they had done its original leaders. Louis, Prince of Condé, was justly regarded as the secret head of the Calvinists; and his high quality, which nearly allied him to the crown, formed no protection against the machinations of his powerful enemies. Seduced by assurances of personal security, to attend the convocation of the States-general at Orleans, he was seized, imprisoned, and after a trial destitute even of the formalities of justice, he was sentenced to an immediate death. Anthony King of Navarre, his elder brother, first prince of the blood, whose more flexible and yielding character rendered him less an object of apprehension to the Guises, was only detained in confinement. But, at this critical moment, the sudden death of the young King Francis, while it rescued the Prince of Condé from his impending danger, opened a new scene in France.[c]

Conspiracy of Amboise. 1560. March.

December. Death of Francis the Second.

[c] Mezerai, De Thou, Davila.

CHAP. I.

1561. Charles the Ninth.

Regency of Catherine of Medicis.

A minority, in name, as well as in effect, took place. Charles the Ninth, who succeeded to the throne, being still in his childhood, it became indispensable to nominate a regent. Catherine of Medicis, the Queen-mother, who had hitherto remained during two reigns, in a state of comparative obscurity; availing herself with promptitude and address, of the consternation of the Guises, of the depression of the princes of the blood, and of the absence or disgrace of the Constable Montmorenci; procured her own elevation to the regency. If the rectitude of her intentions, had equalled the extent and versatility of her talents, it is probable that her administration might have proved equally pacific, and beneficial to the kingdom. But, regardless of veracity, and destitute of principle, she substituted artifice and dissimulation in their stead; while, only intent on the preservation and prolongation of her own authority, she sacrificed to it the great interests of the state and monarchy. Incapable of crushing, or of coërcing by force the various factions, she attempted by dividing them, to render herself the common arbitress: but the effort exceeded her power, and the object eluded her grasp. The Guises recovering from their first astonishment, and supported by their own intrepidity, formed a coalition with their antient rival the Constable, whose zeal for the support of the Catholic religion, prompted him to bury in oblivion all past animosities. The Marshal St. André, one of the most powerful noblemen

System of her administration.

of the court, a favourite of Henry the Second, and not destitute of talents, having joined the confederacy, France, like antient Rome, saw a Triumvirate in title, as well as reality, form itself in her own bosom. The King of Navarre, fluctuating in his opinions, both religious and political; allured by the specious and illusory promises of the Guises; and jealous of his brother's superior consideration, lent his aid to the Triumvirs. Being thus rendered superior to all controul, they no longer observed even the forms of deference, or of submission to the Regent; and Catherine, left destitute of any other resource, embraced the dangerous expedient of calling to her aid the Prince of Condé, who, together with the Admiral Coligni, commanded the forces of the Hugonots.[d]

CHAP. I.

1561. Factions in the court.

From this fatal measure originated the dissensions by which France was long afflicted and desolated. Three civil wars in succession, each more fiercely contested than the preceding one, extinguished all loyalty, obedience, or veneration for the laws. In the course of their progress, the principal personages were swept off by various species of violent and premature death. The King of Navarre was killed by a ball, in the trenches before Rouen. St. André perished at the batle of Dreux; and the Duke of Guise himself, who, with some defects of character, must ever be ranked among the most exalted and illustrious persons of the age, expired by

1562. Commencement of the civil wars.

1562. November.

December.

1563. February.

[d] Davila, p. 120. De Thou, Mezerai.

CHAP. I.

the hand of an assassin, under the walls of Orleans. Montmorenci, at near fourscore years of age, fell, covered with honorable wounds, in the action at St. Denis; while the Prince of Condé was put to death on the field of Jarnac in Angoumois, rather by deliberate assassination, than by the chance of war.

1567. November.

1569. March.

Duke of Anjou placed at the head of the army.

Catherine, who still survived among the convulsions of the monarchy, had placed her second son Henry, Duke of Anjou, for whom she early betrayed the fondest predilection, at the head of the royal armies destined to exterminate the Hugonots. But that party, which religious zeal sustained, far from being extinguished by the loss of their leader, seemed to acquire new vigor under the guidance of the celebrated Coligni. A fourth battle, fought at Montcontour in Poictou, in which the arms of Charles the Ninth proved again completely victorious, yet did not terminate the contest. Supported by his own resources, Coligni, after struggling with impediments, only to be surmounted by men who fight for their religious freedom, re-appeared in the ensuing year, at the head of a formidable body of forces, in the eastern provinces of the kingdom; repulsed the troops sent to impede his progress; and even threatened to transfer the theatre of war to the vicinity of the capital.[c]

October.

1570. Conclusion of peace.

In such a situation, peace became not only eligible, but indispensable. It was concluded

[c] Mezerai, passim. De Thou, Davila, D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ.

soon

CHAP. I.

soon afterwards, on conditions highly favorable to the Hugonots[f]. The measures of the court appeared to have undergone a total change, and to breathe only conciliation, or oblivion. Coligni was invited to repair to the royal presence; and Charles affected to listen with pleasure, to his exhortations of employing the fiery and turbulent spirits with which the kingdom abounded, in foreign expeditions of national glory, or public advantage. The marriage of Henry, the young Prince of Navarre, with Margaret, sister to the King, was already settled; and every circumstance seemed to ensure a long continuance of tranquillity. These fallacious appearances preceded, and eventually terminated in the massacre of Paris: an event which, whether we regard it as the joint act of Charles and Catherine his mother; as the separate machination of the Queen herself; or, as finally produced only by adventitious causes, unconnected with any deliberate system of perfidy; stands equally alone, as the most flagitious and detestable violation of faith and humanity, commemorated in the annals of mankind. Its consequences, nevertheless, were not such as might naturally have been expected. The security, supineness, and inactivity of the government, allowed the Hugonots leisure to recover from their first consternation. Despair furnished them with arms; and Rochelle, the principal seat of their strength, ventured to shut its

1570. August.

1572. August. Massacre of Paris.

[f] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 49 and 50.

gates

CHAP. I.

gates against the forces of the crown. Henry, Duke of Anjou, after a long and fruitless siege, was compelled to withdraw his troops from the place; and esteemed himself fortunate, that his election to the crown of Poland, afforded him an honourable pretext for abandoning the enterprize. France was desolated by a fourth civil war; and the mutual animosity manifested in the course of the contest, bore a proportion to the circumstances by which it had been produced.[g]

1572. Siege of Rochelle.

1573. June.

Election of the Duke of Anjou to the crown of Poland.

The ambitious mind of Catherine of Medicis, perpetually occupied in visionary schemes for the elevation of her children, had profited of the extinction of the race of Jagellon, in the person of Sigismund Augustus, to procure the Polish crown for her favourite son Henry. The levity and venality of the Poles; the political intrigues of Montluc, the French embassador at Cracow; and the reputation which the Duke of Anjou had acquired for military skill and valor, by his victories over the Hugonots; combined to produce the unexpected success with which the attempt was accompanied. But, the new monarch did not betray the same alacrity to take possession of his dominions, which he had manifested in their pursuit and attainment. The extensive power, annexed to his quality of Lieutenant-general of France; the pleasures of a licentious court; and the prospect of the

[g] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 105. De Thou, vol. vi. p. 664. Davila, p. 390—3.

succes-

succession itself, which Charles's state of declining health rendered probable; all these motives tended to retard his departure. The interposition, and even the menaces of the King his brother, became requisite to propel and to vanquish the reluctance of Henry. [h]

CHAP. I.

1573. October.

His absence nevertheless, by no means restored a calm; and the conclusion of the reign of Charles the Ninth was marked with the same commotions, which had characterized its commencement and progress. Francis, Duke of Alenson, youngest of the four sons of Henry the Second, and whose youth had excluded him from any personal participation in the counsels which led to the massacre of St. Bartholomew; expressed not only the warmest affection for the Admiral Coligni, but, the utmost indignation at his unmerited fate. Anxious to occupy the situation of lieutenant-general, left vacant by the King of Poland's election; and finding his demands to fill that office eluded, he projected at once to effect his escape, and to put himself at the head of the Protestants. It was meant that he should have been accompanied in his flight, by the King of Navarre; who, after having been, though not without long debates, excepted from the general carnage of his friends and followers, was since that period detained as a captive at Paris, together with his cousin, Henry, Prince of Condé. The irresolution of the Duke of Alenson proved fatal to

1574. New commotions in France.

[h] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 104—112.

the

CHAP. I.

the enterprize, and conducted his adherents to the scaffold; while Charles the Ninth, after long struggling with a distemper, which the vigour of his constitution enabled him to resist, but not to surmount, terminated his life and reign, in the flower of his age.[i]

1574. Death of Charles the Ninth. May.

Aspect of France, at that period.

The aspect of France at the time of his decease, was widely different from the appearance which it exhibited under Henry the Second. In the interval of only fifteen years, the manners of the kingdom had undergone a complete alteration. The generous spirit of chivalry, characteristic of the age of Francis the First, and of which courtesy and humanity formed the inseparable attendants, no longer existed. The people, habituated to scenes of civil war, were rendered ferocious and sanguinary. Almost all the arts which tend to soften and polish society, were extinguished in the general confusion. Manufactures and industry languished; while commerce, become precarious from the insecurity of the coasts, and hazardous on account of the piracies which infested the narrow seas, annually diminished. Even agriculture, so indispensable to the existence of every state, was faintly and imperfectly carried on; while the peasants, plundered and massacred by a licentious soldiery, had neither any security for the possession of their lives, nor for the enjoyment of their property. Bands of foreign mercenaries, with which France was inundated, compleated

Anarchy, and insurrections.

[i] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 124. Davila, p. 407. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 63.

the

the general desolation. Elizabeth, Queen of England, whose generosity was always under the guidance of her policy, had early sent assistance to the Prince of Condé; and had received from him the important town of Havre de Grace, situate at the mouth of the Seine, as a security for her remuneration. The united efforts of the Catholics and Hugonots, had indeed afterwards ejected her from the possession: but, her fleets continued to infest the coast of Normandy, to throw supplies of arms and provisions into Rochelle, and to molest the general trade of the kingdom. Philip the Second, King of Spain, whose zeal for the support of the Romish faith and church, served as a mask to conceal his purposes of interest and ambition, sent repeatedly supplies of troops to the aid of Charles; but, only attentive to prolong the calamities of France, and to avert the storm of war from his provinces in the Netherlands, he constantly withdrew them before they could render any effectual service to the royal cause.

CHAP. I.

1574.

Conduct of Elizabeth.

Of Philip the Second.

Switzerland, for the space of near a century, ever since the reign of Louis the Eleventh, had constantly raised a body of stipendiaries, which was intended for, and maintained by the French kings. To their intrepid fidelity, Charles the Ninth owed the preservation of his freedom, if not of his crown, at the famous retreat from Meaux to Paris; and in the battle of Dreux, their valour had not a little contributed to the victory finally obtained over the Hugonots. The sovereign pontiffs, deeply interested in the contest between

Of the Switzers.

Of the Popes.

CHAP. I.

1574.

tween the adherents of the two religions, had unlocked the treasury of St. Peter, and dispatched not only pecuniary, but military support, to the eldest son of the church. It was however from Germany, the fruitful nurse of soldiers in the sixteenth century, that the most inexhaustible supplies of men were furnished. While the Princes of Saxony attached to the Catholic party, aided the crown; the Elector Palatine, and all his house, not less zealously devoted to the doctrines and followers of the Reformation, sent a numerous army to the assistance of Condé and Coligni. The *Landskenets* and *Reitres*, infantry and cavalry, composed a principal part of the forces on either side; and though numbers perished in the repeated conflicts, the survivors returned to their native country, loaded with the spoils, and enriched by the treasures of France. [k]

Of the Germans.

Policy and measures of the Queen dowager.

These calamities, great in themselves, were not diminished nor alleviated, by the probable prospect of any immediate, or beneficial change. The maxims and policy of Catherine of Medicis, which had plunged the kingdom into such accumulated distress, continued still to operate in all their force. That authority which she had exercised during the minority of the late king, she retained in a considerable degree after its termination, though no longer invested with the title of Regent. Her vast and capacious mind, fertile in the arts of destruction,

[k] De Thou, D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. Davila, Mezerai, passim.

had

had planned, matured, and executed, the massacre of Paris. The remorse which Charles the Ninth felt from his reflections on so atrocious an act, heightened by his resentment at Catherine's predilection for her second son Henry, had not only conduced to make him withdraw from her his confidence, but even to menace her with the effects of his indignation. The progress of disease, together with the diminution of his intellectual and bodily strength, as he approached the end of life, had nevertheless effaced or weakened these unfavourable impressions. His apprehension of the Duke of Alenson's design to impede the return of the King of Poland into France, and to infringe the order of succession, had even induced Charles in his last moments, though not without manifest signs of reluctance, to entrust the government to his mother, and to delegate to her the regency. Those who looked forward to futurity, anticipated with natural regret and alarm, the augmentation of her influence under the reign of a prince, who had always received from her, and manifested towards her, the strongest marks of reciprocal affection.[1]

CHAP. I. 1574.

Francis, Duke of Alenson, last Prince of the line of Valois, had not hitherto exhibited any endowments of disposition or character, which could justly excite the hopes, or awaken the expectations of his countrymen. Fickle and inconstant in his friendships; irresolute in his

Duke of Alenson.

[1] Ut supra, passim.

temper;

CHAP. I. 1574.

temper; timid and pusillanimous in adversity; seduced by favorites and flatterers; plunged in dissolute pleasures; and destitute of that elevation of sentiment, or generous ambition, which connects the public interests with its own; he acted only a subordinate part: and notwithstanding his high quality of presumptive heir to the crown, he was treated as a prisoner of state.[m]

King of Navarre.

The King of Navarre, afterwards so distinguished under the name of Henry the Fourth, and who was reserved by Providence to restore tranquillity to his country; had displayed on the contrary, under circumstances the most humiliating, a firmness of mind and magnanimity, which impressed even his enemies with respect and admiration. His valour, courtesy, and humanity, had endeared him to the nation. But, deprived of his patrimonial dominions; separated from his friends and adherents; compelled to abjure his religion; regarded by the Queen-mother with jealousy and suspicion; destitute of resources, and detained in an inglorious captivity; all his great qualities were buried in obscurity, and did not unfold themselves till called into action, by the augmenting calamities of France.[n]

Prince of Condé.

His cousin, Henry, Prince of Condé, occupied a greater portion of public attention, though removed by his birth to a more remote distance

[m] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 102 and 114. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 37. Davila, p. 396.

[n] De Thou and Mezerai, passim.

from

from the crown. Of a character severe, serious, and reserved; little addicted to the gratifications of pleasure; zealously attached to the principles of the reformed faith and worship; inflexible, brave, indefatigable, active, and formed for war; he had already assumed an ascendancy in the counsels of the Hugonots, and aspired, like his father, to occupy the rank of their chief and leader. Having effected his escape from Amiens, he had reached the frontiers of Germany; where resuming the exercise of the Protestant religion, which Charles the Ninth had obliged him by menaces to renounce, he prepared to enter the kingdom with a formidable army.[a]

CHAP. I. 1574.

The place which the Prince of Condé emulated to fill, as head of the Protestants, was actually possessed by the Duke of Guise in the estimation of the Catholics, who regarded him as their protector. Nature had conferred on him almost all the qualifications, calculated to conciliate and to retain the popular favour. Generous and munificent, even to profusion; affable and condescending in his manners; intrepid to a degree of temerity; and adorned with every grace of exterior figure and deportment, he attracted universal admiration. His courage, at a very early period of his life, had been distinguished during the siege of Poitiers by Coligni, as his father's had been at that of Metz, by Charles the Fifth. Descended from the reigning family of Lorrain, and allied by marriage to the house of Bourbon; possessing

Duke of Guise.

[a] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 122 and 139.

CHAP. I. 1574.

an hereditary hatred for the Hugonots, and the most ardent zeal for the support of the antient religion, he was considered as its best defender. Surrounded by a numerous and powerful band of adherents; guided by the counsels of his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorrain, and capable of the boldest projects of ambition; he seemed to be scarcely comprehended within the rank of a subject, and already inspired jealousy into the crown itself.[p]

Family of Montmorenci.

The house of Montmorenci, which had formerly maintained under Henry the Second, so long a competition with that of Guise, for power and employment, was fallen into a state of depression and disgrace, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Ninth. The Marshal Montmorenci, eldest son to the late Constable, one of the most virtuous and incorrupt noblemen of the age, who had married Diana, natural daughter of Henry the Second, was destitute of issue. Having been implicated in the recent attempt of the Duke of Alenson to withdraw from court; his participation, or privity in an enterprize, regarded by the government as so criminal, had afforded a pretext for committing him to the Bastile, where he languished in confinement[q]. Damville, his next brother, not less odious to the government, owed his personal safety only to his absence, added to his distance from the capital. He

[p] De Thou, Mezerai, passim.

[q] Davila, p. 399. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 121 and 122. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 54.

had

had been appointed governor of the province of Languedoc; and being well aware of the machinations of Catherine of Medicis, who exerted every means to seize his person, he already began to concert measures with the Protestants, for their common preservation. The two remaining sons of the Constable, Thoré and Meru, involved in the common ruin or persecution of their family, openly joined the insurgents, who in various quarters of the kingdom began to appear in arms.[r] CHAP. I. 1574.

Such was the general aspect of the court of France, at the death of Charles the Ninth. Paris had not yet experienced in an extended degree, the calamities inseparable from civil war. The Hugonot armies which had twice approached its walls, were neither sufficiently numerous nor powerful, to affect it by the pressure of famine; and they were speedily driven from the vicinity of the capital, by the superior forces of the Catholics. The frequent residence, and expensive amusements of a voluptuous court, by maintaining the arts of luxury, diffused a fallacious opulence. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, during which the city was abandoned to all the enormities of a sanguinary and ferocious populace, had been only temporary; and the extermination of the Protestants had produced an apparent uniformity in religious faith and worship, among the inhabitants. No symptoms nor indications of disloyalty and rebellion had State of Paris.

[r] Davila, p. 395. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 122.

CHAP. I.

1574. hitherto manifested themselves in the metropolis: on the contrary, when the Marshals Montmorenci and Cossé were sent prisoners to the Bastile, by order of Catherine, a short time before the decease of Charles the Ninth; the Parisians not only exhibited every demonstration of joy, but even furnished a guard for the security and detention of the captives.[s]

Condition of the provinces.

But, these appearances of order and prosperity which subsisted in the metropolis, were contrasted with every species of misfortune throughout the provinces. Subordination and obedience had been subverted among the people, by long habits of revolt and hostility. Normandy.

Normandy, peculiarly exposed by its local situation, to the attacks of the English, was become the the atre of war. Montgomery, whose fatal dexterity in the management of arms, had originally produced the calamities of his country; and who had escaped by flight from the carnage of his friends, at the massacre of Paris; having landed with a naval force, not far from Cherburg, made a rapid progress. Being invested soon afterwards by the Marshal Matignon, in the town of Domfront, after a brave defence against superior numbers, he had surrendered upon a vague assurance of personal safety, which was subsequently violated. Colombieres, another of the Hugonot leaders, perished while fighting in the breach, at St. Lo; and every

[s] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 122. Davila, 399. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 54 and 55.

part

CHAP. I.

part of the province experienced the fury, or severity of the royalists.[t]

1574. Brittany.

Brittany, protected in some measure by its almost insular position, and its distance from the interior parts of the kingdom, enjoyed a degree of comparative calm: but, from the mouth of the river Loire, to that of the Garonne, comprehending an extent of near one hundred leagues, in the richest, most populous, and commercial districts of France, the Hugonots maintained a conflict with their enemies. Their principal power and resources were concentered in Poitou, Angoumois, and Saintonge, the La Vendee of the present day; where their numbers far exceeded those of the Catholics. The battles of Jarnac and of Montcontour had been fought in that quarter of the kingdom, which during the third civil war, formed the principal theatre of military operations. Rochelle, open to the Atlantic, enjoying an extensive trade, supplied by England with arms and ammunition, inhabited by zealous adherents of the reformed religion, and elated by the recent advantage gained over the Duke of Anjou, whom they had compelled to raise the siege; already began to arrogate and assume a species of independance. It was justly to be apprehended that a Calvinist republic might arise within the monarchy of France, the most inimical to its grandeur and repose, supported by foreign

Rochelle.

[t] Davila, 403—6. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 57—60. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 118 and 119.

CHAP. I.

powers, and difficult, if not impossible to be reduced by force.[u]

1574. Guyenne, and Gascony.

Guyenne and Gascony, extending from the banks of the Garonne, to the foot of the Pyrenees and the frontiers of Spain, were scarcely more tranquil. Blaise de Montluc, a Marshal of France, whose name has been transmitted by his writings as well as by his actions, to posterity, had during many years exercised over the Hugonots in those provinces, the most inhuman tyranny. Wounded at the storm of a little town in Bigorre, named Rabasteins, and incapacitated by age, no less than by infirmities, for the fatigues of a camp, he had been recently dismissed from the command of the royal forces; but his successor did not restore calm or order among the inhabitants of that rich and populous portion of France.[x]

Languedoc.

In the extensive government of Languedoc, Damville, to whom it had been entrusted, no longer professed any deference for the orders of the court. Irritated by the Queen mother's attempts to involve him in the proscription of his family, he embraced a line of conduct the most repugnant to his natural character and inclinations. Attached to the crown by principle, gratitude, and affection, he saw himself reduced to the necessity of engaging in open rebellion: zealously devoted to the antient religion, he

[u] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 44 and 45. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 116, &c. Comm. de Montluc, vol. iv. p. 344. Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, vol. iii. p. 396 and 397.

[x] Mezerai, Comm. vol. iv. passim.

found

found himself compelled to join with the Protestants. Having made himself master of Montpellier, and of some other places in the vicinity of the Rhone, he prepared to defend his acquisitions by force of arms; and he even peremptorily refused to lay down his office, notwithstanding repeated mandates issued by the sovereign.[y] CHAP. I. 1574.

No part of the kingdom, during the whole course of the reign of Charles the Ninth, had suffered more severely from civil dissentions, than the two provinces of Dauphiné and Provence. From the gates of Lyons, on either bank of the Loire, to the walls of Marseilles, every village was fortified, and every castle was defended; while all interior communication was suspended by the excesses and ravages of the contending parties. The mountainous and rugged nature of the country; the facility of escaping into Savoy, or Switzerland; and the superior numbers of the Hugonots in Dauphiné, prolonged the contest. The names of Montbrun, Mouvans, d'Acier, and des Adrets, on the side of the Protestants; and those of the Count of Sommerive, and the grand Prior of France, a natural son of Henry the Second, had on the other; were become proverbially detestable for their acts of wanton and deliberate cruelty. Humanity seemed to be extinct in the breasts of the chiefs, and mutual animosity knew no limits in the gratification of vengeance.[z] Dauphiné, and Provence.

[y] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 48. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 119. and 120. Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, vol. iii. p. 397.

[z] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 85 and 86. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 138.

CHAP. I.

1574.

Burgundy, which after the decease of Marshal Tavannes, had been committed to the care of the Duke of Mayenne; and Champagne, under the immediate government of his brother the Duke of Guise, might be esteemed in a great measure exempt from these calamities. But, the oppressions and disorders committed on the inferior classes, by a soldiery destitute of any regular pay, were nevertheless such as loudly to demand interposition and redress. The weakness of the French government rendered it necessary to tolerate enormities, by which the peasants were reduced to poverty and ruin. [a]

Burgundy. Champagne.

Interior provinces.

The interior and central provinces, Berry, Auvergne, and the Limosin, together with those fertile tracts lying along the banks of the Loire, from Orleans down to Angers, though they had largely participated in the general desolation of the kingdom, were not marked by any characteristic, or discriminating features. Picardy, the government of which had been confided to the Prince of Condé, manifested no less aversion on that account, to the reformed religion. The inhabitants, credulous, irascible, and susceptible of the strongest impressions of superstition, already gave indications of that spirit and temper, which shortly afterwards fitted them for the reception and commencement of the famous union, denominated "the League."

Picardy.

30th May. Measures of Cathe-

The first act of Catherine of Medicis, after the decease of Charles the Ninth, was in-

[a] Memoires de Tavannes, p. 33—35.

stantly

stantly to dispatch messengers, who might convey with the utmost speed, intelligence of the event, to the King of Poland. In order to insure obedience to her own authority, during the interval which must necessarily elapse before his return from so remote a country, she immediately addressed letters to the governors, magistrates, and great officers of the crown throughout France, notifying the death of the late sovereign, and his previous nomination of herself to the regency. The situation of public affairs, demanded measures equally lenient and vigorous. The Protestants, who had already in many provinces taken up arms; encouraged by the vacancy of the throne, and by the absence of the legitimate successor, were becoming daily more formidable. The Prince of Condé, who hovered on the borders of the kingdom, appeared ready to enter France, at the head of a numerous body of German forces. Even the Catholics had lost their respect for the royal authority, and felt little attachment towards the person, or the office of the Regent. But Catherine, long accustomed to the toils and labours of government, mistress of all the arts of dissimulation, and having in her custody the first princes of the blood, as well as the other principal persons of whose fidelity she was doubtful, manifested no symptoms of apprehension. In compliance with the usual maxims of her conciliating and temporising policy, she even commenced a negotiation with La Noue, the chief of the insurgents in Poitou; and anxious to suspend all operations

1574. Catherine, on her assumption of the regency.

CHAP. I.

1574. Truce with the Hugonots.

tions of a hostile nature, till the arrival of the new king, she agreed upon a truce for two months, with the Hugonots. They were further permitted to hold a general assembly of their delegates, at the town of Milhaud in Languedoc, where measures, it was hoped, might be concerted for a general pacification. [b]

Trial of the Count of Montgomery.

But, in the person of the Count of Montgomery, her revenge, superior either to the dictates of justice, or the considerations of honour, induced her to make a distinguished sacrifice. That gallant and unfortunate nobleman, having surrendered upon the assurances of personal safety and protection given him by Matignon, commander of the royal forces; had been nevertheless, by Catherine's express command, transferred to Paris. The parliament, subservient to the Regent's wishes, became the instrument of her vengeance. Montgomery, upon pretexts equally frivolous and insufficient, was condemned to suffer capital punishment, as guilty of treason; and he was previously put to the torture, in order to extort from him an avowal of the pretended conspiracy, meditated by the Admiral Coligni against Charles the Ninth. His courage and magnanimity did not forsake him under such trying circumstances. He bore the rack, without uttering any exclamations, except those of indignation for the breach of faith committed against him; and though dislocated in all his

[b] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 83 and 84. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 134—137. Davila, p. 411—415.

limbs

limbs by the severity of the torture, he preserved an intrepid countenance to the last moment of his life. From the sledge, on which he was drawn to the place of execution, he addressed the populace, and desired their prayers. On the scaffold, he displayed the same unshaken constancy and composure, terminating by the hand of the executioner, a career which had been distinguished in its course, by many brilliant atchievements. His real crime, for which he suffered, was the unintentional death of Henry the Second; and Catherine offered him up as a victim to the memory of her husband. "Memorable example," says De Thou, "to teach "us that in the strokes which attack crowned "heads, misfortune is criminal, even though "the will be innocent!" [c]

CHAP. I.

1574.

His execution.

26th June.

While

[c] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 87. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 135 and 136. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 130 and 131.

D'Aubigné, who was a spectator of Montgomery's death, has left us the most circumstantial and interesting detail of that event. It may serve, in many particulars, to excite equal pity and indignation. "The Count," says he, "wept, when he was informed of the decease of Charles the Ninth, and from that instant regarded his "own execution as certain. The commissioners before whom he "was examined, would not exempt him from the torture, though "he did not attempt to disguise, or to conceal any fact. He was "conducted to the scaffold, in the "Place de Greve," dressed in "mourning; and after having complained that his executioners had "broken his limbs, by the violence of the application of the torture, "he composed his countenance, in order to harangue the spectators." D'Aubigne has preserved Montgomery's speech in this last, and trying situation. It breathes all the energy and elevation of a mind, sustained by a cause which appeared to him to be a good one, and for which he had sacrificed every consideration. He denied and reprobated the absurd pretexts, which Catherine of Medicis and his judges had used, in order to condemn him as guilty of treason. Having mentioned his involuntary crime in the death of Henry the Second, he enjoined the mul-

CHAP. I.

1574. Flight of the King of Poland, from Cracow.

While these events took place in France, the King of Poland received at Cracow, the intelligence of his brother's death, and his own succession. Two very different modes of action presented themselves to him, and claimed his mature deliberation. The first, more honorable and dignified, was, after demanding permission of the senate to revisit his hereditary dominions, to endeavour to procure the election of the Duke of Alenson, to the Polish crown. The other, more expeditious and secure, was by a precipitate retreat, or rather flight, to gain the frontiers of the Austrian territories; and regardless of every inferior consideration, to re-appear again in France. The latter advice, more analogous to the character, and gratifying to the inclinations
18th June. of Henry, prevailed. After having made the necessary dispositions therefore, for concealing his design, he quitted his capital under cover of the night, with only a few attendants; and had already reached the borders of Silesia, before his departure was universally known in Cracow.

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multitude assembled to inform his sons, who had been involved in the penalties of his sentence, and degraded from the rank of nobles; that, "if they had not the virtue to regain it, and to restore "themselves, he consented to their degradation." He protested that his only real guilt consisted in his steady adherence to a religion proscribed by the government, and for which so many individuals had already suffered in France. Having requested the executioner not to apply any bandage before his eyes, he passed a short time in prayer, and then submitted to his sentence. De Thou, who is more concise in his narration, agrees in every important particular with D'Aubigné, and condemns the injustice of the trial and execution.

The

CHAP. I.

The Poles, irritated at his contemptuous dereliction of the royalty to which they had so recently elevated him, manifested their resentment by arresting the principal persons of his court, who remained in their hands: but the senate being assembled, and having heard the reasons assigned for his conduct, ordered his equipage and servants to be honourably conducted to their sovereign. A body of near four hundred horse, pursued and overtook the fugitive Prince, who having passed the Polish limits, was no longer in danger of being led back as a captive to his own palace. Count Tenczyn, at the head of a small number of gentlemen, advancing unarmed towards him, endeavoured by exhortations and entreaties, to induce him to return to Cracow. Henry received these marks of affection, with similar demonstrations of regard; promised to revisit Poland, after having restored tranquillity to France; assigned the motives which had necessitated him thus to withdraw from a country and people, for whom he should always preserve the most lively attachment, and continued his journey to Vienna. [d] 1574.

His reception by the Emperor Maximilian.

The circumstances of his flight, which might be esteemed in some measure ignominious, when contrasted with those of his elevation to the throne of the same kingdom, only a few months preceding, were speedily effaced from his mind, by the reception which he met with in the Im-

[d] Solignac, Hist. de Pologne, vol. v. p. 455—473. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 72—76. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 140 and 141.

perial

CHAP. I. 1574.

perial court. Maximilian the Second treated him with every mark of deference and honour; advanced to meet him with a splendid retinue; and detained him during some days in the Austrian capital, among festivities and entertainments. That beneficent and enlightened monarch, whose maxims of toleration rendered his reign happy and prosperous; strenuously exhorted Henry, on his return into France, to adopt similar principles of government. He advised the adoption of gentle measures towards the Hugonots, and besought of the King to commemorate the æra of his entry into his hereditary dominions, by giving peace to his subjects of every persuasion. These arguments and entreaties, Maximilian enforced by the example of his own, and of his father Ferdinand's experience; who, after many ineffectual efforts to reduce the Germans by violence, had found that in matters of faith, war, far from curing, only aggravated the evil. It would have been fortunate for Henry and for his people, if the remonstrances of the Emperor had influenced his future public conduct.[c]

Magnificent treatment of Henry at Venice.

Unwilling to pass through the territories of the Elector Palatine, Frederic the Third, the King determined on taking his course through Lombardy. That German Prince, strongly attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, had demonstrated such abhorrence of the massacre

[c] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 76. Solignac, vol. v. p. 473—476. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 141 and 142.

of

of Paris and its authors, when Henry visited Heidelberg on his progress towards Poland, in the preceding year, as deeply to impress his royal guest with most painful recollections. These motives induced him to direct his steps through the Austrian provinces of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, to Italy. The magnificence with which the Republic of Venice honoured his approach and arrival, far exceeded that which any other European state could display in the sixteenth century. From the instant that he entered the Venetian territories, down to the moment of his final departure, every variety of superb and diversified amusement was lavished by the government, to gratify their royal guest. That celebrated commonwealth, though already past its meridian of power, still remained the center of commerce, arts, and luxury. Its peculiar situation, built among the waves of the Adriatic, enabled the Senate to exhibit a species of pomp and splendour, not to be found in any other capital. During nine days which Henry passed in Venice, he beheld a perpetual succession of shews, games, and recreations. Triumphal arches, raised on the designs of Palladio; combats, naval and military; illuminations and balls, where the Venetian ladies, equally celebrated for their charms and for their gallantry, endeavoured to captivate the young monarch; —these varied pleasures, which the policy of the Republic offered to its antient and most powerful ally, detained him in a sort of pleasing bondage, notwith-

CHAP. I. 1574.

CHAP. I.

notwithstanding the pressing exhortations of Catherine his mother, to hasten his return.[f]

1574. 27th July.

Quitting with reluctance a city which contained so many attractions, and accompanied by the Dukes of Savoy, Mantua, and Ferrara, he proceeded towards Turin; remounted the river Po, and arrived in that capital, after having declined to visit Milan, where Don John of Austria commanded for the King of Spain.

24th Auguſt. His arrival at Turin.

State of France.

France, during his absence, had been torn by almost every calamity, incident to a state where religion served as a pretext, to conceal the projects of faction and ambition. In Poitou, the suspension of arms which had been concluded by the Regent, was violated on her part; and the royal forces under the Duke of Montpensier, profiting of the security of the Hugonots, after having captured Fontenay, menaced Rochelle itself. Damville, after long irresolution, issued a proclamation, avowing his junction with the Protestants; while on the other hand, the Prince of Condé published a Manifesto, dated from Heidelberg, the capital of the Palatinate, accusing the evil counsellors of the crown, with having produced the disorders under which the kingdom laboured. He preceded it, by letters addressed to the delegates assembled at Milhaud, in which he demanded supplies of money, and promised to conduct to their assistance a military force. They in return elected him for

[f] Hist. de Venice, par Laugier, vol. x. p. 293—307. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 78—81.

their chief, though with very limited powers of every kind. Throughout Languedoc, Guyenne, and the principality of Bearn, the Protestants universally appeared in arms; but in Dauphiné, where Montbrun commanded against the royal army, hostilities were carried on with the greatest violence.[g] CHAP. I. 1574.

In the midst of such complicated national misfortunes, which the Regent fomented by her insidious and treacherous policy; that princess, after having caused the obsequies of the late King to be performed, quitted Paris, accompanied by her two prisoners, the Duke of Alenson, and the King of Navarre. Passing through the province of Burgundy, she reviewed in person, a body of six thousand Switzers whom she had caused to be levied; and arriving at Lyons, impatiently expected in that city, the return of her favourite son.[h] Catherine advances to Lyons. August.

The court of Turin, during the short residence which Henry made in it, was become the center of political intrigue and cabal. Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, daughter of Francis the First, one of the most accomplished princesses of the age, possessing an enlarged and liberal understanding, endeavoured to enforce the exhortations made to him at Vienna, by the Emperor Maximilian, on the subject of toleration; and she attempted, in conjunction with the Duke, her husband, Emanuel Philibert, to recon- Political intrigues at Turin.

[g] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 138—140. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 85—95.
[h] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 95. Davila, p. 418.

CHAP. I. 1574.

cile him with the family of Montmorenci. Damville himself, whose loyalty and attachment to the crown had been shaken, but not effaced, by the persecution of Catherine of Medicis; and who hoped to regain the interest which he had formerly possessed in Henry's esteem; ventured, under the engagement of the Duke of Savoy for his protection, to repair in person to Turin. It was not possible to give a more unequivocal proof of his confidence in the royal honour. The King received him with demonstrations of apparent affection. Bellegarde, who occupied a distinguished place in the royal favour, and Pibrac, chancellor of the Queen of Navarre, having joined their efforts to those of Damville, appeared to have made a deep impression on his mind. These auspicious beginnings were nevertheless soon subverted by the emissaries of the Regent, who not only induced Henry to suspend every measure tending towards peace; but, instilled into him suspicions of Damville's fidelity. That nobleman, alarmed at the visible alteration in his sovereign's behaviour, and apprehensive of being arrested, left Turin with precipitation; and returning to his government of Languedoc, immediately signed an agreement with the Protestants. [1]

Schemes of the Duke of Savoy.

Emanuel Philibert, though he had failed in this attempt to diffuse tranquillity over France,

[1] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 131 and 132. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 144 and 145.

proved

proved successful in another negotiation, which affected him far more deeply and personally, considered as a sovereign. Of all the numerous fortresses and extensive conquests, acquired by Francis the First, and Henry the Second, during their long wars in Savoy and Piedmont, only Pignerol, Savillan, and the valley of Perouse, remained to France; the others having been restored to the Duke, in 1559, by the treaty of peace made with him in that year. The possession of these places not only gave however to the French kings, a facility of penetrating at pleasure into Italy, through the passages of the Alps; but, from their vicinity to Turin itself, held the dukes of Savoy in awe, and kept them in a state of perpetual dependance. Every motive of sound policy dictated therefore to preserve them with jealous attention. But, Henry, gained by the caresses of Emanuel Philibert, and neglectful of his true interests, was prevailed on to promise their restitution; thus commencing his reign by a measure the most injurious to the crown and monarchy of France.[k]

CHAP. I. 1574.

Arrival of Henry at Lyons.

The King soon afterwards quitting Turin, proceeded towards the frontiers of his own dominions, attended by the Duke of Savoy, at the head of a body of his troops. This escort could not be considered as merely honorary, the province of Dauphiné being infested by the Hugonot forces, who committed perpetual de-

[k] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 145. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 132 and 133. Davila, p. 419.

CHAP. I.

1574. 5th Sept.

predations on the confines of the two states. At the "Pont de Beauvoisin," where France and Savoy divide, he was met by his brother the Duke of Alenson and the King of Navarre, whom he received with marks of external civility and affection. On the following day, the interview between himself and his mother, took place; after which the new king, accompanied by Catherine and a vast train, made a public and magnificent entry into the city of Lyons.[1]

[1] Davila, p. 420. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 133 and 134. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 146 and 147.

CHAP. II.

Condition of the kingdom, and of parties, at Henry's assumption of the government.—Continuation of the war against the Protestants.—Restitution of Pignerol, Savillan and Perouse, to Savoy.—Journey of the court to Avignon.—Death of the Cardinal of Lorrain.—Inauguration, and marriage of the King.—Capture, and execution of Montbrun.—Inactivity and vices of Henry.—Escape of the Duke of Alenson.—Defeat of Thoré.—Truce with Alenson.—Entry of the German army into France.—Flight of the King of Navarre.—Negociation, and conclusion of peace.—Foreign affairs.—State of Flanders.—Election of Stephen Battori, to the crown of Poland.—Death of the Emperor Maximilian the Second.—Aspect of Europe.

HENRY the Third, at the period of his return to France, was in the flower of youth, having scarcely attained his twenty-third year. His figure was not only graceful and elegant; but an air of majesty, tempered by sweetness, accompanied all his actions; and his eloquence, which was dignified and captivating, tended to persuade mankind of the solidity of his talents. He had been unfortunately educated in the practice of dissimulation, though initiated in his earliest years, to the fatigues and habits of a camp. The military reputation which he had acquired by the victories of Jarnac and of Montcontour, for which he was principally indebted to Marshal

CHAP. II. 1574. September.

CHAP. II.

1574. Tavannes, his governor, had conduced in no small degree to elevate him to the Polish throne. Europe expected from him as he attained to manhood, a display of martial energy and hardy virtue. Notwithstanding his youth, he had been privy to, and even active in all the counsels which preceded the massacre of Paris, where he manifested the most unrelenting barbarity towards the Hugonots. The short period of his stay in Poland, had scarcely allowed time for the exercise of any distinguished qualities; and the circumstances of his flight from that country, though inglorious, were in some measure excused or palliated, by the necessity of his immediate personal appearance in France.

Character and qualities of the new King.

Situation of France.

The situation of the kingdom to which he was called by the decease of Charles the Ninth, though critical and alarming, could by no means be regarded as desperate. Two powerful factions, irritated almost to frenzy against each other, by a long series of mutual injuries, violence, and war, persisted to maintain a desperate conflict. Religion, which added new incentives to their animosity, infinitely widened the sources of discord. But the leaders on either side, still continued to profess obedience to their common sovereign: the majesty of the throne, though defaced and violated, was not subverted; and the wounds which had been inflicted on the state, however deep and recent, yet admitted of a cure. Two great and opposite lines of conduct presented themselves for Henry's choice either to signalize his accession, by giving

peace to his subjects; or to continue the war already begun, till he had accomplished the subjection and extermination of the Hugonots. Every inducement of humanity, wisdom, and policy, seemed to dictate the former measure. He had already exhibited a disposition towards it; and its accomplishment must have been attended with consequences equally beneficial to his people, and happy for himself. But, the pernicious counsels of his mother; the intolerant spirit of the age, which knew no limit to persecution; the desire of signalizing his zeal against those enemies whom he had opposed and vanquished in his early youth; sustained by the hope of triumphing over, and finally extinguishing both the Catholic and Protestant factions, when weakened by their mutual dissentions;—these fallacious reasonings determined him, after some hesitation, to give orders for the prosecution of hostilities.[a]

CHAP. II. 1574.

From this improvident and ruinous step, originated all the subsequent misfortunes of his reign; and every part of his conduct evinced to the nation, that effeminacy, indolence, and luxury, had enervated his mind. Instead of exerting himself with vigour to reform the abuses, which under shelter of the commotions of the late government, had invaded the different departments; he no sooner arrived in his dominions, than he resigned himself to inactivity. An

Vices and defects of Henry.

[a] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 136—152. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 153. Davila, p. 420—426. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 132 and 133.

CHAP. II. 1574.

enemy to fatigue, and incapable of application, he neglected all affairs of moment: surrounded only by parasites and favourites, difficult of access, entrenched in ceremonies and parade, or like Mark Anthony on the Cydnus, negligently reclined in a barge richly decorated, on the placid stream of the river Soane, he appeared to have forgotten every duty annexed to his station. It was not possible any longer to recognize the prince who had been educated in the field, and trained to the hardships of a military life. The nobility and the veteran officers of his army, disgusted at a change so unexpected, forsook the court, which became desert; and all the high expectations to which Henry had given birth, when presumptive heir to the crown, disappeared from the instant of his acceſſion.[b]

Restoration of Pignerol and Savillan.

The contempt and alienation which so indecent a conduct excited among his subjects, were not diminished by the accomplishment of his imprudent engagement to the Duke of Savoy, in restoring to him Pignerol, Savillan, and the valley of Perouse. Henry, as his enemies asserted, more from the facility and prodigality of his disposition, than from any sentiment of equity or justice, ordered the immediate evacuation of those garrisons. All the remonstrances of the Duke of Nevers, to whose government they had been confided, though joined to the opposition of his wisest ministers, proved ineffectual[c].

[b] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 134 and 135. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 150.

[c] Memoires du Duc de Nevers, folio, Paris, 1665, vol. i. p. 3—26. and p. 33—68.

Emanuel

Emanuel Philibert repaid the generosity of the King, with neglect; and, liberated from so formidable a neighbour, assumed a higher tone in all his negociations with France. It seemed as if the new sovereign, not content with a total omission of the great duties demanded from him, desired to diminish the royal power, and to contract the limits of his dominions.[d] CHAP. II. 1574.

Renewal of the civil war.

While Henry, at the commencement of his reign, thus sacrificed his own dignity and the esteem of his people, the kingdom became a prey to civil war. In Poitou, the Duke of Montpensier, after a long siege, made himself master of Lusignan, and demolished that celebrated fortress. But on the other hand, even in the vicinity of Lyons, the Hugonots, unrestrained by any respect for the person of their sovereign, committed depredations with impunity, and refused to pay obedience to the royal mandate, enjoining them to lay down their arms. Montbrun, their commander, who had pillaged the baggage of Henry, on its passage from Savoy, treated with neglect the injunction ordering him to retire to his own home. Bellegarde, to whom the command of the Catholic forces in that quarter had been committed, was repulsed in an assault upon the obscure town of Livron in Dauphiné; and every circumstance seemed to combine in marking the æra of Henry's return to France, with ignominy and misfortune.[e]

[d] Davila, p. 419. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 154—157. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 151 and 152.

[e] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 153 and 154. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 159—164.

As

CHAP. II.

1574.

Dissipation of the court.

As if insensible to the national distress, the court during these occurrences was plunged in dissipation, and immersed in pleasures. Catherine of Medicis encouraged the propensity of her son to profusion and indolence, with a view to engross a larger portion of authority, and to render her interposition more necessary in affairs of state. Indifferent as to the means by which she accomplished her objects, and restrained by no principles of virtue in their prosecution, she made gallantry subservient to all her political projects. The ladies of her household, initiated in the mysteries of their sovereign, aided and facilitated her views, by sacrificing their honour at her command; and she endeavoured to soften the captivity of the Duke of Alenson, and the King of Navarre, who were still detained in an honourable confinement, by stimulating their passions, or fomenting their jealousy, as circumstances seemed to dictate.

Attachment of Henry, to Mary of Cleves.

The King himself, divided between various candidates for his affection, had determined to espouse Mary of Cleves, Princess of Condé, of whom, while Duke of Anjou, he had been so deeply enamoured. The indecorum, if not the criminality of such a choice, and the obstacle interposed by her previous marriage, were disregarded by Henry, in the violence of his attachment. Religion afforded a favourable pretext for procuring a divorce from her husband; the Princess, who had been left behind in France, having adhered to the Catholic faith ever since the massacre of Paris. The Queen-mother, terrified

rified at the ascendant which a beautiful and accomplished woman, when once raised to the throne, might have retained over her son, exerted every endeavour to prevent its accomplishment; but all her efforts would have proved ineffectual, if death had not interposed. The Princess was carried off by a sudden and violent distemper, which naturally excited suspicions of a sinister nature, in an age and court to which the use of poisons was familiar. Henry at first appeared to be inconsolable for this event; but, after betraying the most extravagant symptoms of grief, he with equal rapidity passed to the contrary extreme of oblivion; and even attempted to attribute to the effect of enchantment, his emotions for the death of his mistress.[f] 1574.

Under the pretence of opening a negotiation with Marshal Damville, governor of Languedoc, which measure would naturally be rendered more practicable by approaching the confines of the province itself, Catherine soon afterwards induced the King to transfer his residence from Lyons, down the Rhone, to Avignon. During his stay in that city, which constituting a dependancy of the papal see, naturally presented continual scenes of devotion and superstition, Henry first beheld, and was deeply impressed by processions of penitents, or flagellants, who publickly inflicted on themselves the severest discipline. The institution of these fanatics, which had originated about a century preced- Institution of the penitents.

[f] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 155.

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CHAP. II. 1574.

ing, among the fervid and fantastic imaginations of the Italians, had not yet penetrated into France. The King, who together with effeminacy, and many of the vices most contrary to morals, nourished notwithstanding, a decided inclination for that factitious piety which consists in external ceremonies, eagerly caught at the shadow of religion. Partly from inclination, partly from policy, in order to prove the sincerity of his zeal for the Catholic faith, he even degraded himself so far as to assist in person, followed by all his courtiers, at the processions of the penitents of Avignon.[5]

December. Death of the Cardinal of Lorrain.

This devout extravagance proved fatal to the Cardinal of Lorrain, who was carried off by a violent fever, occasioned by his attendance, barefooted, on one of the ceremonies of the flagellants. Notwithstanding the variety and splendor of his talents, he was neither lamented by the King, nor regretted by the nation. His arrogance in prosperity, the violence of his ambition, and the pusillanimity of his conduct under circumstances of danger or depression;—these defects and vices had proved injurious to his family, while they rendered him generally unpopular. Even the clergy, to whose interests he seemed to have been so much devoted, regarded him as the enemy of the ecclesiastical order; and accused him of having sacrificed the revenues of the church, to his desire of acquiring, or retaining the favour of the crown. He was quickly

[5] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 164 and 165. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 156.

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forgotten in a profligate court, engrossed only by pleasure and dissipation.[h] CHAP. II. 1575.

Wearied with ineffectual efforts to conclude an accommodation with Damville, who being on his guard against the insidious artifices of the Queen-mother, refused to accede to her propositions; Henry at length quitted Avignon, and began his journey back to Lyons. The Protestants, who retained possession of many places on either side of the Rhone, not intimidated by his approach, defended themselves with equal courage and success. His presence in the camp before Livron, an inconsiderable town of Dauphiné, and the efforts made by the troops under the eye of the King, to render themselves masters of the place, only produced an aggravation of disgrace. They were repulsed; and the Hugonots, elated with so signal an advantage, outraged their sovereign from the walls, by the most insolent and poignant reproaches. They even pursued the royal army in its retreat, cut in pieces the Switzers who formed a portion of it, and did not spare the sick that had been left behind in the camp.[i]

Royal forces, repulsed before Livron. January.

Under such an accumulation of ignominy, Henry proceeded nevertheless towards Rheims, where the ceremony of his inauguration as King of France, was performed with the accustomed magnificence. On the following day, his nuptials were solemnized with Louisa, daughter of

15th Feb. Inauguration of Henry.

His nuptials.

[h] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 155 and 156. Davila, p. 427. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 165—7.

[i] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 246.

Nicholas,

CHAP. II. 1575. Nicholas, Count of Vaudemont, a prince of the ducal house of Lorrain. The King and court, plunged in excesses of every kind, appeared to have forgotten that the country was desolated by civil war. Prodigality compleated the ruin of the finances; and even an insurrection which took place in the garrison of Metz, one of the most important frontier possessions of France, securing its repose on the side of Germany, could not rouse to exertion a prince sunk in sloth and luxury. [k]

Ineffectual conferences for peace. Long and ineffectual conferences were held after Henry's return to the capital, between the delegates of the moderate Catholics, who acknowledged Damville as their head; together with the emissaries of the Prince of Condé, as chief of the Hugonots, acting together on one side; and on the other, the council of state, at which the King himself assisted in person.

May. No beneficial consequence resulted from their deliberations, which only produced new delays, accompanied with mutual distrust. Throughout almost all the provinces, hostilities were commenced, and carried on with augmented violence: though not attended with any decisive consequence to either party, yet the principal advantages were gained by the Protestants. The city of Perigueux being taken, was abandoned to pillage by Langoiran, one of their commanders; while Damville extended his ac-

[k] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 157. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 248—250. Davila, p. 428.

quisitions

quisitions in Languedoc. Montbrun, who had long been the terror of the Catholics in Dauphiné, and who had recently defeated their general in an engagement, experienced in his turn the mutability of fortune. Having pursued with too much precipitation, a body of Catholic forces; his troops, imprudently occupied in pillage, were attacked by the enemy, who had rallied. Montbrun, after having performed every duty of a veteran and intrepid leader, was compelled to retreat; and his horse falling under him, fractured his thigh. In this situation he surrendered prisoner of war, upon assurances of protection for his life. But the court, mindful of the indignities received from him, anxious to inflict an exemplary punishment on so distinguished an officer, and little attentive to the observation of any engagements; caused him to be interrogated before judges, like an ordinary criminal accused of treason. He was condemned to die; and the sentence was accelerated, from an apprehension of his escaping by a natural death, in consequence of his fracture. When conducted to the scaffold, although debilitated in body, and scarcely capable of sustaining himself under acute pain, he exerted the most chearful and composed fortitude, harangued the spectators, and submitted to his fate without a murmur. Like the Count de Montgomery, he was sacrificed to the vengeance of the court; but his execution, far from intimidating the Hugonots, only exasperated them to new exertions. Lesdiguieres, at that time in early

CHAP. II.

1575.

Defeat of Montbrun.

July.

His execution.

CHAP. II. 1575.

early youth, and who afterwards rose by merit and talents, to the high dignity of Constable of France, succeeded to Montbrun's credit and command. By the severity of his discipline he soon rendered his troops more formidable, and maintained his superiority over the royal arms in Dauphiné.[1]

Indolence and effeminacy of Henry.

While these scenes of bloodshed and violence were acted in the different provinces of the kingdom, Henry, equally regardless of his own character, or of the public security, gave full scope to all his weaknesses and vices. Resigned to

[1] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 268—272. Davila, p. 842 and 429. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 133—137.

The leading circumstances of Montbrun's capture and execution, are found in De Thou, and confirmed by D'Aubigné. Every exertion was made to obtain his pardon, or at least to procure from the court, that he might be treated as a prisoner of war. The Prince of Condé, as well as Damville, sent deputies to intercede, and to remonstrate in his favour. Even the Duke of Guise, whose powerful interest might have saved any other criminal, and who wished to exchange him against Besme, the assassin of Coligni, then in the hands of the Hugonots, could not prevail. The Queen-mother and Henry remained inexorable. Montbrun had been the first subject who had dared to take up arms against the crown: he had put to death, numbers of Catholics; and when he had recently plundered the royal baggage, he accompanied the act with a sarcastic observation, that "war and play rendered all conditions equal." The court being alarmed lest a natural death, in consequence of the fracture of his thigh, should rob them of their prey, his trial was indecently precipitated by the parliament of Grenoble. A striking similarity exists between the particulars of his death, and those which accompanied Montgomery's execution. Though extenuated and weakened to a great degree, his fortitude continued unshaken on the scaffold; and he ventured, in defiance of every prohibition, to harangue the people. He protested his innocence of rebellion, declared his satisfaction in laying down his life for the cause of religion, and stretched out his head to the executioner. The Hugonots severely revenged his death on the Catholics, in the vicinity of Grenoble. De Thou strongly condemns the spirit of vengeance by which the court was actuated on this occasion.

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the dominion of rapacious favourites, to whom the people justly applied the odious denomination of *minions*, his profusion in heaping honours and emoluments on them, knew no limits. The most unmanly pleasures which occupied his time, left him neither leisure nor inclination for public business. Perpetual rivalities between the favourites of the King and those of his brother the Duke of Alenson, transformed the royal residence into a theatre of quarrel, outrage, and violence. Intrigues of policy and gallantry formed the only objects of serious attention. The Duke of Guise, who had already conceived those projects of elevation, which he afterwards executed, stimulated the young Queen to render herself mistress of her husband, and to aspire to the guidance of the state; but Louisa of Vaudemont did not possess sufficient energy and talents, to succeed in such an attempt. Educated in principles of an austere and melancholy devotion, she possessed few mental endowments calculated to retain the affections of a dissolute and capricious prince. Her modesty and virtue secured indeed the esteem, but, never enabled her to acquire any ascendant over the mind of Henry. The Queen-mother, with her usual dissimulation, fomented the jealousy, which from personal, as well as political causes, continually took place between the Duke of Alenson and the King of Navarre. Those princes were still detained in a sort of confinement; while the court, careless of every external concern, was immersed in pleasures,

CHAP. II. 1575.

CHAP. II.

1575. when an unexpected and alarming incident roused the King to a degree of temporary exertion.[m]

Escape of the Duke of Alenson.

Francis, Duke of Alenson, had hitherto been restrained by various motives, from making any effort to withdraw himself out of the royal power, or to form a party in opposition to the crown. The expectation of his election to the vacant Polish throne, which had been first held out to his ambition, had already proved fallacious; and the post to which he aspired of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, was justly considered as too powerful and independant, to be again conferred on any subject. Tired with fruitless solicitations; insulted by the minions of the King, who paid little regard to his dignity; and stimulated by his own adherents, who hoped to acquire consideration from their master's freedom; he determined to quit a court and capital, where he was subjected to continual mortifica-

15th Sept. tions. Having, on pretence of an affair of gallantry, gone into the suburbs of Paris, he instantly mounted on horseback; and before the intelligence of his flight was publicly known, he reached the city of Dreux, on the confines of Normandy, from whence he issued a Manifesto calculated to conciliate the popular favour. It enumerated the grievances under which the nation suffered; reprobated the number and severity of the pecuniary impositions levied on the people; stated the necessity of a reform in

[m] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 161—163.

the government, and finished by demanding an assembly of the States-general.[n] CHAP. II.

1575.

The consternation of the court on this event, equalled the security by which it had been preceded. Henry, awaking from the lethargy in which he had been plunged, sent the Duke of Nevers, at the head of a body of troops, to pursue his brother; commanded the posts in the vicinity of the capital to be occupied; and made every preparation for defence. Meanwhile, the Duke of Alenson having continued his retreat, was met in Poitou by many of the Hugonot chiefs, who expected protection and support from his junction with their party; and the consequences to the government were rendered more serious, by the certainty of the approach of a German army, conducted by the Prince of Condé in person, which was ready to enter the kingdom. Terrified at such a prospect, destitute of resources in himself, and ever ready from the impulse of his natural disposition, to have recourse to temporizing measures; the King, by the advice of his mother, opened a negociation for peace. Catherine, anxious to prevent hostilities between her two sons, and at the same time desirous to render her own interposition necessary; undertook to go in search of the Duke of Alenson, and to dispose his mind towards a reconciliation. In order to facilitate so delicate, as well as arduous a work,

Consternation occasioned by it.

Efforts of the Queen Dowager, to prevent a war.

[n] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 82—86, and p. 92—94. Davila, p. 431—433. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 285—288. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 176—179. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 163-4.

CHAP. II. 1575. she began by liberating the two Marshals, Montmorenci and Cossé, who had languished in the Bastile since the conclusion of the late reign. Their influence with the Duke of Alenson, she well knew, was great; and his Manifesto had demanded in specific terms, their emancipation from an unjust and cruel captivity. Accompanied by those noblemen, she immediately quitted Paris, and set out on her journey towards Champigny in Touraine, the place appointed for holding a conference.[o]

A considerable detachment from the army of the Prince of Condé, commanded by Thoré, one of the younger sons of the Constable Montmorenci, having already passed the Rhine, had entered France, and advanced to the banks of the river Marne, on its march into the central provinces of the kingdom, to join the Duke of Alenson. At the town of Dormans in Champagne, the royal forces, commanded by the Duke of Guise in person, attempted to oppose their further progress; and as their numbers were greatly superior to those of Thoré, it seemed to be imprudent in him to hazard an action. But that nobleman, confiding in the bravery of his troops, did not decline the combat. After a long and desperate engagement, he was defeated; the Germans, who composed a principal part of his force, were cut to pieces; and he himself, at the head

Combat of Dormans.

November.

[o] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 287—292. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 178. Davila, p. 434. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 92—99.

of

of a few cavalry, escaped with difficulty. The victory on the other side, was not purchased without bloodshed; and the Duke of Guise in the pursuit, received a wound on the cheek from a private soldier, the scar of which he always retained, and which served as an honourable testimony to the people, of his zeal in the defence of the Catholic religion.[p] CHAP. II. 1575.

Notwithstanding so severe a check, the Duke of Alenson did not manifest any eagerness to accept the terms offered him by Catherine, or to conclude an accommodation. The Queen-mother, after ineffectually exerting every endeavour for the purpose, was reduced therefore to the necessity of agreeing to a truce for six months, between the two parties. Nor did Henry purchase even the short and precarious suspension of hostilities during so limited a period, without great concessions; the stipulation of payment for the German troops levied by the Prince of Condé; places of security to be assigned to the Hugonots; and a body of forces for the guard of the Duke of Alenson. On these conditions the truce was at length published by that Prince in his camp, and acquiesced in by his Protestant allies.[q] It was evident that on the part of the King, as necessity alone had dictated so humiliating an agreement, no serious intention existed of carrying

Truce concluded.

22d December.

Artifices of the court.

[p] Davila, p. 435 and 436. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 292—295. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 179—183.

[q] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 295. Davila, p. 437. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 99—104.

CHAP. II. 1575.

rying it into effect. Pretences were soon found for delaying or evading some of the stipulations; and the governors of the places which were to be surrendered to the confederates, being secretly encouraged by the court, refused to comply with the orders issued for their evacuation. Henry himself made preparations for war, and ordered a levy to be instantly commenced of six thousand Switzers. But, when he attempted to exact pecuniary supplies from the inhabitants of Paris, and convoked an assembly for the immediate object of raising money, he received a peremptory refusal. The parliament, clergy, and citizens of the capital, in the language of a free and indignant people, represented without disguise in the presence of the King, the abuses, malversations, and profusion by which the treasury had been drained, and the country exhausted. Henry, far from punishing, did not even venture to display his resentment at so bold a remonstrance; and having dismissed the assembly, he prepared to support the hostilities against his brother, from other sources, and more easy modes of contribution[r]. The throne of England at that period of time was filled by a sovereign, in whose vigilance, ability, and economical expenditure of the public treasure, her subjects might repose the utmost confidence. But, if instead of Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, or her profuse and feeble son, James the First, had reigned over the English; we may justly question whether

[r] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 296—299.

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the house of commons, or the magistrates and citizens of London, would have ventured to make as bold and firm an opposition to the crown, as Henry the Third experienced on this occasion. So much nearer did the French seem to be to the attainment of civil liberty, and constitutional Freedom, in 1575, than were the English! But, in the sixteenth, as in the eighteenth century, the excesses of the French people soon plunged the capital and the country, in all the horrors of insurrection, violence, and anarchy.

1575.

1576. Entrance of the Germans into France. January.

The German army, led by John Casimir, son to the Elector Palatine, and by the Prince of Condé, which had so long hovered on the borders of the kingdom, at length began its march. Their numbers exceeded eighteen thousand; and as the royal forces, commanded in the absence of the Duke of Guise, by his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, were far inferior, no effectual obstacle was interposed to impede their entry and progress into the interior provinces. Having passed through Lorrain and Burgundy without almost any opposition, they crossed the Loire, and effected their junction near Moulins in the Bourbonnois, with the Duke of Alenson. Previous to this event, Henry, King of Navarre, wearied with a confinement of near four years in the court of Charles the Ninth, and of Henry the Third; disappointed in every hope of obtaining employment; odious to the Queen-mother; and forgotten or neglected by the King himself; took the resolution of escaping

Flight of the King of Navarre.

CHAP. II.

1576. 23d Feb.

from his captivity. Having deceived his guards, while engaged in hunting, he passed the river Seine without delay, accompanied only by a few chosen friends; arrived safely at the city of Vendome; and having resumed the exercise of the Protestant religion, continued his retreat towards Guyenne, of which province he was governor.[s]

State of the confederates.

Meanwhile, the chiefs of the confederate army, who unanimously acknowledged the Duke of Alenson for their supreme head, having assembled at Moulins, presented articles to the King; on the acceptance of which, they professed a readiness to lay down their arms. Henry received their deputies with marks of regard, and promised a speedy answer to their demands. Notwithstanding the formidable nature of their force, and the defenceless situation of the crown, many causes conduced to render their operations weak and languid. The German soldiery, ill paid and mutinous, were with difficulty retained under their standards, and insolently threatened to exact by violence, their arrears. The leaders of the combined forces were besides composed of different nations, religions, and interests. Mutual jealousy and distrust prevailed among them; and the Prince of Condé, who had with equal danger and success, conducted so large a body of foreign troops into the center of the kingdom, saw himself at once sup-

[s] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 183—189. Davila, p. 438—440. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 169. D'Aubigné, Memoires, p. 49—52.

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supplanted by the Duke of Alenson. The recent escape of the King of Navarre, which introduced a new competitor, encreasing the collision of opposite claims for pre-eminence, it became impossible to act with union and energy towards the attainment of any object; and the court availed itself of these circumstances. The Duke of Alenson betrayed the strongest

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The most minute relation of the escape and flight of the King of Navarre, is to be found in D'Aubigné, who has violated his customary brevity, in order to commemorate every circumstance which preceded and accompanied an event, so decisive in its consequences, and so hazardous in its execution. Six persons only were privy to it, who swore inviolable secrecy; and the King of Navarre, by affecting to believe that he should be constituted Lieutenant general of France, confirmed the security of the court On the evening preceding the day upon which he effected his escape, Fervaques, one of the six persons entrusted with the design, revealed it to Henry the Third. D'Aubigné having been present, and suspecting the treachery of his associate, charged him with it; and on his avowing the fact, instantly carried the intelligence to his master. The King of Navarre, after a day passed in hunting, accompanied by two gentlemen his guards, who never quitted him, was at the town of Senlis, ten leagues distant from Paris. On receiving information from D'Aubigné, that his intention was discovered, he instantly took a decisive resolution. Accompanied by a few adherents, he mounted on horseback, and having deceived his guards by an ingenious fiction, gained the banks of the Seine, which he passed near Poissi, on the following morning. Arriving after numberless perils, at Alenson, he was there speedily joined by near two hundred and fifty gentlemen. Among these was Fervaques himself; who being warned by Grillon, that Henry the Third, notwithstanding the recent service which he had performed, was irritated against him, and had even determined to put him to death, as an accomplice with the King of Navarre, immediately contrived to leave Paris. As an excuse for his perfidy, he asserted that Madame de Carnavalet had previously revealed to Henry the Third, the plan concerted for the King of Navarre's escape; and his apology was admitted by his master. D'Aubigné expressly says, that the soldiers who guarded the King of Navarre in the Louvre, were placed about him by Catherine of Medicis herself; that they were zealous Catholics, and had, almost all of them, been active in the massacre of Paris.

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CHAP. II. 1576.

disposition to sacrifice his allies, to the acquisition of personal power for himself; and the Queen-mother, anxious to withdraw him from his new friends, gratified him on that favourite point. After a number of delays, the treaty of pacification was finally concluded by Catherine, and soon afterwards solemnly ratified by the King in person. Almost all the articles proved ignominious or injurious to the crown, and advantageous to the confederates.[t]

Conclusion of peace. 14th May.

Conditions of it.

The establishment of the Duke of Alenson was augmented by the addition of three of the richest provinces of France, lying nearly contiguous, Berry, Touraine, and Anjou: he himself, laying aside the title of Alenson, assumed from that period the title of Duke of Anjou. Eight cities, situated in different parts of the kingdom, were ceded to the Protestants, as guarantees for their security: every immunity or privilege, civil and religious, which could place them on an equality with the Catholics, was granted them; and among these concessions were included freedom of worship, the right of celebrating marriage, and of holding under certain regulations, ecclesiastical synods, or consistories. The King not only submitted to reverse the attainders against Coligni, Montgomery, Montbrun, and their adherents; but, he disowned on his own part, all participation in, or approbation of, the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Pensions and rewards were confer-

[t] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 117—135.

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red on John Casimir, who had raised the German army which enabled the confederates to dictate to the crown; and lastly, a convocation of the states general was stipulated to be held within six months, in order to represent the grievances of the people, and to apply adequate remedies to the public misfortunes. [u] CHAP. II. 1576.

Affairs of the Netherlands.

While Henry, by concluding a peace which degraded his own dignity, and excited the indignation of his Catholic subjects, obtained a temporary respite from his enemies; the Spanish provinces in the Netherlands exhibited a scene of anarchy and desolation, only paralleled in modern History by the horrors which disgraced and depopulated France, during the first years of the French revolution. Requesens, after a short and troublesome administration, distinguished by his unremitting, but unsuccessful exertions, to restore order throughout the Low Countries, had been carried off by a violent distemper. His gentle and conciliating character might probably have revived the allegiance of the Flemings for Philip the Second, if all possibility of reconciliation had not been precluded by the cruelties of his predecessor, the Duke of Alva. The sudden and unexpected nature of Requesens' death, left him no time to execute the orders received from the court of Madrid, respecting the nomination of a successor. In this defect of any legal governor, the council of state assumed the supreme authority, which was after-

Death of Requesens.

[u] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 169—174. Davila, p. 442—445. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 416—418. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 215.

wards

CHAP. II. 1576.

wards confirmed by the King of Spain. But, the revolt of the Spanish troops which took place at this time, their seizure of the town of Alost, together with the multiplied acts of outrage and violence committed by them on the people, rendered impracticable any attempt to conciliate the minds of men to the antient government. The sack of Antwerp, justly esteemed at that period the most wealthy and commercial city in Europe, renewed the scene acted at Rome, near half a century earlier, by the soldiers of Charles the Fifth, under the command of the Constable of Bourbon. It completed the calamities of Flanders, and drove the states of that province to the final necessity of uniting with those of Holland and Zealand, for their common protection.

Pacification of Ghent.

By the celebrated league, denominated "the Pacification of Ghent," it was solemnly agreed to make war upon the Spaniards, till they should be entirely driven out of the Netherlands. However singular it may appear, this treaty was notwithstanding made and published in the name of Philip himself, from whom the states of Flanders had not withdrawn their obedience, while they took up arms to expel his forces. But, the small number of his troops left in the country, and the augmenting progress of the Flemings, rendered it a very unequal contest. The only adequate remedy which presented itself for such accumulated evils, lay in the immediate nomination of a governor, whose talents and capacity might still retrieve the royal affairs. Don John

John of Austria was selected by the King, for that high employment. The lustre of his birth, the attachment universally entertained for the memory of the Emperor Charles the Fifth his father, who was himself a native of Flanders; when added to the high reputation which Don John had acquired by the great naval victory of Lepanto;—these circumstances, it was hoped, might aid his efforts, and terminate the rebellion which had so long rendered the Netherlands a theatre of war. The Prince instantly obeyed the orders of his brother and sovereign: having received directions whereby to regulate the line of his conduct, he passed through France in disguise, and arrived safely at the city of Luxembourg, capital of the province of the same name, which had refused to enter into the general confederacy of the Flemings, for the expulsion of the Spaniards from the Low Countries. [x]

1576.

Arrival of Don John of Austria.

After the precipitate departure of Henry from Poland, that kingdom remained for a considerable time, in a state of Interregnum. The senate and the other orders having subsequently met at Warsaw, drew up letters to him, which, though couched in terms of obedience and respect, strongly depictured the resentment of the nation, for his contempt or abandonment of their crown. They demanded his immediate return, in order to resume the functions of his royal dignity, as well as to protect them against

Affairs of Poland.

[x] Strada, de Bello Bel. vol. ii. p. 285—320. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 364—394.

external

CHAP. II. 1576.

external invasion, with which they were menaced; and in case of his refusal or delay, they signified to him their resolution, after declaring the vacancy of the throne, to proceed to a new election. Henry made only some faint and ineffectual exertions, to avert so decisive a measure on the part of his former subjects. Pibrac, who was dispatched by him to Cracow, with instructions to propose to the Diet, the union of the two kingdoms of France and Poland, found the sentence of deposition against him already issued, and the decree published in the capital. In so desperate and hopeless a situation, Pibrac nevertheless exerted every effort to prevent its accomplishment; addressed letters in Henry's name, to the principal nobles; and urged all the motives which might be supposed to influence their deliberations. But the Poles had irrevocably determined to elect another sovereign; and the two factions by which the kingdom was agitated, however adverse to each other, agreed in their common aversion to the French prince and nation. It is difficult, on reading this portion of Henry's reign, not to be reminded of the flight of James the Second in 1688, from London. The consequences were nearly similar in both instances. James, like Henry, was declared to have abandoned or abdicated the throne; and neither prince ever revisited, or was again called to reign over the people whom he had thus renounced. Nor was their end dissimilar. Henry perished by the knife,

Deposition of Henry by the Poles.

knife of an assassin, while besieging his revolted capital. James expired a fugitive and an exile, beholding his capital and his dominions transferred to his son-in-law, while he himself subsisted on the bounty of Louis the Fourteenth. All circumstances considered, the flight of the French prince, though unbecoming and censurable, appears to have been less imprudent and precipitate than that of the English king. CHAP. II. 1576.

The Emperor Maximilian the Second was chosen in the ensuing Diet, by a considerable party: but his delay in not immediately proceeding to take possession of the crown, proved fatal to his cause, and gave advantages to his competitor, which could never be retrieved. Stephen Battori, a Hungarian nobleman, who had already been elected Great Prince of Transylvania, being called in by his adherents, was raised to the Polish throne. His vigour, capacity, and various endowments, rendered him worthy of so extraordinary an elevation; and Poland under his reign, enjoyed equal tranquillity at home, and respect from foreign powers[y]. Nevertheless it appeared highly probable, that his election would be followed both by a civil and a foreign war. The partizans of Maximilian were numerous and powerful: John Basilowitz, Czar of Muscovy, a formidable neighbour, prepared to support him, and to invade the eastern Election of Stephen Battori. May.

[y] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 273—285, p. 353—356. Solignac, Hist. de Polo. vol. v. p. 477—493.

provinces

CHAP. II. 1576.

provinces of the kingdom: Dantzic, the most opulent and trading city of Poland, commanding the entrance of the Vistula, refused all obedience to Stephen; and the Emperor of Germany himself, though neither of a martial character, nor disposed to engage unnecessarily in hostilities, yet could not tamely submit to renounce a sceptre, which had been conferred on him by a considerable majority of the suffrages of the nation.

Death of Maximilian the Second. October.

The Poles were however exempted from this calamity, by the death of Maximilian, who expired at Ratisbon, in the fiftieth year of his age, after having held the Imperial dignity only twelve years. His loss was deeply and universally felt,

His character.

by every denomination of his subjects. His benignity of disposition, his enlarged principles of toleration, his love of peace, his application to public business, and the desire by which he was animated of diffusing happiness, rendered him inexpressibly dear to his people. The house of Austria, though no longer formidable to the repose of Europe, as it had been under Charles the Fifth his uncle, continued still powerful and respectable. But the Imperial office, which in Maximilian's hands inspired equal veneration and affection, soon fell into contempt, and almost into oblivion, under the feeble administration of his successor Rodolph the Second. Maximilian's last acts were exerted to maintain the civil and religious tranquillity of Germany; nor did the sixteenth century produce any sovereign, so justly entitled to the love

love of his contemporaries, and to the esteem of posterity. [x]

CHAP. II.

1576.

The other principal European states at this period of time, offered few events which materially affected the general repose. England, governed by Elizabeth, enjoyed a profound tranquillity; though that wise and vigilant princess, who never during her long reign intermitted her provident attention to foreign affairs, kept a constant eye upon the concerns of the Netherlands, and already extended to them her indirect assistance against their tyrant. Philip the Second, not less attentive, and still more deeply interested in the fate of the Low Countries, exhausted the immense treasures and resources of his vast dominions, in fruitless exertions to reduce the Flemings to subjection. Incapable of atchieving it by military force, and always apprehensive of the interference of France, he began to move those secret, but powerful springs, in the interior system of the French government, by which the throne of Henry the Third was shaken, and even nearly subverted. Philip himself, occupied in visiting the various provinces of Spain, in reforming abuses, and in restoring justice, discharged with ability the functions annexed to his situation; and he preserved an uninterrupted peace in the interior of the Spanish monarchy, while Flanders was desolated by all the calamities of war [y].

State of Europe.

England.

Spain.

[x] Schmidt, Hist. des Allemans, translated by de la Veaux, vol. viii. p. 384—390. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 358.

[y] Abregé Chronique d'Espagne, et Portugal, vol. ii. p. 425.

CHAP. II.

1576. Portugal.

Portugal, which had reached the summit of political and commercial prosperity, approached the final term of its greatness, and even of its existence as an independant nation. The young King Sebastian, intoxicated with chimerical views of conquest in Africa, appeared to be engrossed by that single object. In defiance of the remonstrances of his ministers, and even of Philip the Second himself, he was preparing to embark on the fatal expedition against Morocco, which while it terminated his life, reduced his country to a state of servitude and degradation under the Spanish yoke. [z]

[z] Abregé Chronique d'Espagne, et Portugal, p. 423 and 424.

CHAP. III.

Origin, formation, and principles of "the League." — Assembly of the States-general, at Blois. — Henry declares himself the chief of "the League." — Renewal of the war with the Protestants. — Peace. — Edict of Poitiers. — Conduct of the King. — State of the court. — Expedition to Morocco, and death of Sebastian, King of Portugal. — Affairs of the Netherlands. — Duke of Anjou is called to the assistance of the Flemings. — Death of Don John of Austria. — Internal concerns of France. — Recommencement of the civil war. — Causes by which it was produced. — Ill success of the Hugonots — Conclusion of Peace. — Affairs of the Low Countries. — Exploits of the Prince of Parma. — — Treaty made by the States of Flanders, with the Duke of Anjou. — Death of Henry, King of Portugal. — Conquest of that kingdom by Philip the Second. — Death, and character of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

CHAP. III.

1576. Condition of France.

THE peace which Henry had recently concluded with the confederate princes, of which Catherine of Medicis was the instrument, had disarmed and disunited that powerful combination; but had by no means secured either his own repose, or the tranquillity of his subjects. Conditions such as the Hugonots had extorted from him, placed them on an absolute equality with the Catholics, in every essential point; and might rather be esteemed the triumph, than the toleration, of the Protestant

CHAP. III. 1576.

religion. Nor could the people persuade themselves, that these concessions were the result of policy in a discerning and sagacious sovereign, attentive to the great interests of his dominions, and watchful over the general felicity. The whole tenor of Henry's conduct exposed him not only to censure, but tended to render him odious and contemptible. Sunk in unmanly dissipation, his prodigality had already exhausted all the ordinary sources of revenue, and subjected him to the severe humiliation of a refusal, when he recently attempted to extort supplies from the capital. His own attachment to the Catholic faith was indeed unquestionable, and his antipathy to all innovation in religious concerns, was a matter equally indisputable. But his devotion had nothing elevated, or even rational in its nature; consisting rather in monastic observances, or ecclesiastical ceremonies unbecoming his high station, than in a sincere obedience to the duties and precepts of religion and morality.

Dissatisfaction of the Catholics.

The indignation excited among his Catholic subjects, at the terms of the late pacification, concurring with the disadvantageous impressions which the King's general character and administration produced, were artfully fomented by the partizans of the family of Guise. They represented, and exaggerated, the vices of Henry; the danger to which he exposed the antient religion; and the urgent necessity of some speedy interposition, to protect from ruin the church and state. The dissimulation

lation of the Queen-mother, and her supposed indifference to every mode of faith; the recent junction of the Duke of Anjou, presumptive heir to the crown, with the Protestants; and the pernicious concessions made by the King, in order to detach him from that party;—all these obvious topics of declamation were insisted on with asperity and malignity. The minds of men, irritated by so forcible an appeal to their passions, and exasperated by the arts of faction, became insensibly prepared for a daring effort; and as Henry had either abandoned or betrayed their cause, they began to look elsewhere for support and protection.[1]

CHAP. III. 1576.

In such a state of fermentation and discontent, no remedy was regarded as too violent for the disease. Allegiance itself seemed to be withdrawn, where superior considerations stimulated to resistance; and it became requisite to combine, for the purpose of mutual preservation against a common enemy. During the turbulent and agitated periods of the reign of Charles the Ninth, indications of a disposition in the people to form confederations or fraternities, had manifested themselves in various parts of France. The avowed, or ostensible object of these associations, was the maintenance of the purity of the Catholic faith and doctrines; but from many causes, they had been confined in their operations, and limited in their extent, under the late King. The

Confederations formed.

[1] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 422—429.

CHAP. III. 1576.

weakness of the sceptre in Henry's hands, and the personal contempt into which he was fallen, encouraged the most timid, while it impelled the most wavering. Picardy, a province remarkable for the bigotry and superstitious fervour of its inhabitants, gave the first open example of an association for preserving the antient religion. By one of the articles of the late peace, the hereditary government of Picardy had been confirmed to the Prince of Condé; and the town of Peronne was assigned for his peculiar residence. He was speedily expected to arrive at that place; and it was natural to suppose, that his presence must be attended with injurious or painful consequences to the zealous Catholics. The apprehension of this impending danger, gave birth to the memorable confederation, known in history by the name of "the League;" which spreading with rapidity, soon overshadowed, and at length overturned the throne; occasioned the assassination of Henry himself; and during near twenty years involved the kingdom in all the misfortunes of civil war, confusion, and anarchy. [b]

Origin of the League.

Its favourable reception.

Humieres, governor of Peronne, was the first instrument and mover of so vast a machine, by encouraging the inhabitants of the place, and of the neighbouring country, to sign the association. The nobility of Picardy, with ardour followed the example, which spread through va-

[b] Davila, p. 446 and 447. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 177—180.

rious provinces: Champagne and Burgundy, from the hereditary influence of the Dukes of Guise and of Mayenne, universally received it. In Poitou, Louis de la Tremouille, Duke of Thouars, from apprehension of the Hugonots, who were numerous and powerful in the vicinity of his estates, introduced it among his vassals, and gave it credit by his support. Agents of an inferior description, chiefly selected from the private walks of life, were its principal promoters in the metropolis. Paris, discontented, and easily inflamed by artful suggestions, embraced with enthusiasm a proposition, which appeared to have no object except the preservation of the civil and religious rights of the nation. [c]

CHAP. III. 1576.

Its nature and principles.

The form and language of "the League" itself, did not, on a superficial view, seem to strike at any of the prerogatives of the crown, or to endanger the public tranquillity. The preservation of the monarchy, and even of the reigning sovereign, formed a distinguished article of the covenant. But on a closer inspection, it became evident that under so fair an appearance, designs were concealed, the most destructive to the kingdom, and to Henry himself. The oath of unlimited obedience to the orders of the chief or head, which was clear and specific, extended to engage the contracting persons to support him against any and every power, which might oppose his commands. No excep-

[c] De Thou, ut supra. Mezerai, ibid.

CHAP. III. 1576.

tion whatever in favour of the crown, being inserted or admitted, it was palpable that another person than the sovereign, might be named to that high and dangerous office. Those who were initiated in the mysteries of the association, already understood that the Duke of Guise was designed to be its leader; and that the King, far from receiving protection, might become the victim of "the League."[d]

Protection extended to it by Philip the Second.

External assistance and support were not wanting, to aid the internal efforts made to spread so alarming a moral and political conflagration. Application was made at a very early period, to the Papal see, for spiritual aid and approbation; while similar demands were conveyed to the court of Spain, for pecuniary supplies, and even, if necessary, for a military force. The answer to both these requests, though not precisely the same, was encouraging. Gregory the Thirteenth, who then filled the chair of St. Peter, a pontiff of zeal, but neither violent nor sanguinary in his character; though he approved the ostensible motives, yet apprehensive of the consequences concealed under them, lent only an ambiguous and mitigated degree of sanction to the project. But Philip, who dreaded the approach of the French arms towards the Netherlands, and already anticipated the application of the Flemings to the Duke of Anjou, or to Henry, for succours, did

[d] Davila, p. 448—452, D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 223—230.

not

not hesitate to promise the most unbounded assistance to "the League," and even accepted the title of its protector.[e] CHAP. III. 1576.

Information of the commencement and progress of this alarming attempt to overturn the principles of civil order and obedience, was conveyed through various channels to the government. An emissary who had been dispatched to the court of Rome, was seized on his return to France, by the Hugonots; and the plan of "the League" in its greatest detail, being found upon him, they rendered it public. Corroborating proofs of the same nature, were transmitted to the King, from his embassador at Madrid, in a manner so clear as to preclude any doubt upon the authenticity of the intelligence. But, numerous reasons induced him nevertheless to dissemble, and to suspend his resentment. The Guises not only denied many of the charges made against themselves personally, as men entertaining ambitious views of elevation: those princes were likewise popular, powerful, and dangerous to provoke. Henry, who was incapable of a steady, systematic exertion, preferred temporizing expedients, rather than violent measures, in every event or situation of his life. His policy, which always aimed at destroying one faction by another, dictated to him to encourage rather than depress, the party of the Catholics; and as he never meant to accomplish the conditions of the late peace, he felt no con- Dissimulation of the King.

[e] Davila, p. 452 and 453. Mezerai, vol. ii. p. 179 and 180.

cern

CHAP. III. 1576.

cern that the general resentment manifested at the favourable terms granted to the Hugonots, afforded him so plausible a pretence for not carrying the treaty into execution. [f]

He eludes the late treaty.

The intentions of the court on this point were clearly manifested, by the infractions openly authorized, or privately permitted, in defiance of all the complaints and remonstrances of the Hugonots. Even the interposition of John Casimir, who had not yet evacuated the kingdom, and whose forces lived at discretion in Burgundy, proved ineffectual to obtain redress. The Prince of Condé, far from being put in possession of the government of Picardy, was even refused entrance into Peronne. The admission of Protestants into the parliaments and courts of justice, one of the most important articles of the recent peace, was delayed or eluded; their assemblies for purposes of devotion were insulted; and every unqualified violation of the treaty, was committed with impunity. Irritated at such a breach of public faith, and destitute of any retreat in case of a recommencement of hostilities, the Prince of Condé, without waiting for the issue of a negociation, which Henry had begun with him for the exchange of St. John d'Angely in the place of Peronne, provided for his personal safety. He rendered himself master of the former city, situated in the province of Saintonge; and he shortly afterwards acquired a more important possession in its

Resentment of the Prince of Condé.

[f] Davila, p. 453 and 454.

vicinity.

vicinity. Brouage, a town not distant from Rochelle, and communicating with the Atlantic, fell into his hands; two valuable captures, which formed no inconsiderable equivalent for the loss of his government of Picardy. [g]

CHAP. III. 1576.

Under these circumstances of public fermentation and animosity, the assembly of the states general met at Blois. They were opened by the King in person, who, accompanied by his brother the Duke of Alenson, by the Queen-mother, and the Catholic princes of the blood, in a long and eloquent harangue, depictured and deplored the condition of the kingdom. He represented the decay of loyalty, the diminution of commerce, the triumph of immorality, and the universal depravity which pervaded all orders of the people. He professed his readiness to listen to their advice, and besought their co-operation towards restoring the prosperity of France. These gracious and conciliating assurances on his part, were answered by similar demonstrations of affection. But the King, who had flattered himself that he should be able to guide and controul the deliberations of the states, was not long in discovering, that a more powerful, though a concealed cause, influenced all their deliberations. The boldest invasions of his prerogative were attempted; a renewal of the war against the Hugonots was loudly demanded; and the majority protested against the toleration or existence of

Convocation of the states general. December.

[g] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 432—436. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 176.

any

CHAP. III.

any religion, except the Catholic, throughout the kingdom[h]. In so embarrassing a situation, beset with difficulties, and conscious that the emissaries of the Guises were become masters of the assembly; Henry embraced an expedient, which, however it might be the result of necessity, fully evinced his own weakness. Apprehensive that "the League" would dictate to him in the most peremptory terms, and even turn their forces against him; still more alarmed at the idea that the Duke of Guise might be named to the vacant place of chief; he resolved to assume that post, himself. Having taken the resolution, he executed it immediately; signed "the League" in the most public manner, assumed the title of its head, and transmitted the confederation itself to Paris, with orders to receive it throughout the kingdom.[i]

1576. Henry signs the confederation of "the League."

So incontestable a proof of his adherence to the Catholic faith, accompanied by the prospect of those calamities which were inseparable from a renewal of war, began to produce a deep impression on the national assembly. The members of the third estate, aware that on the body of the people, whom they specially represented, the pecuniary burdens must principally fall, betrayed symptoms of aversion to the resumption of arms. Henry augmented these proofs of repugnance, by a requisition of two millions of Ducats, (a sum not very far short of a million

Measures adopted by the King.

[h] Davila, p. 458—463.
[i] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 458 and 459. Davila, p. 466.

sterling,)

sterling,) as indispensable for maintaining the armies to be employed; and he ventured to propose an alienation of the domain of the crown to a considerable annual amount, as the most eligible mode for raising the money, in the present exigency. The proposition was solemnly argued in the assembly; and after a long discussion, the virtue of the representatives of the commons, rejected it in a manner the most decisive. The King, anxious on the one hand to reduce the Hugonots to a state of civil and religious dependance; but yet more desirous to avoid engaging in a war for their extermination, still delayed and avoided extremities. He even sent, with a view of deprecating hostilities, a deputation respectively to the King of Navarre, and to the Prince of Condé, as well as to Marshal Damville. The reception experienced by the deputies, proved different, according to the temper and disposition of the three individuals. From the first, an answer was received, which, though equivocal and ambiguous, breathed the spirit of obedience to the crown, and of moderation on religious concerns: but the Prince of Condé, of a character more zealous, inflexible, and severe than his cousin, refused either to acknowledge the validity of the states general, or to receive their delegates. Damville, while on one hand he professed the strongest adherence to the Catholic faith, reprobated nevertheless the violation of the late edict; and declined entering into any nego-

CHAP. III.

1576.

1577. Deputation sent to the Hugonots.

CHAP. III. negociation, exclusive of the other confederates.[k]

1577. Renewal of the civil war. The irresolution of Henry on this occasion, was overborne by the imprudence of the Protestants themselves, who, incensed at the revocation of a treaty which had secured to them so many and important immunities, refused to admit of any innovation, or even modulation of the articles. But, the event sufficiently demonstrated, how erroneous an estimate they had formed of their own strength and resources. Disunited among each other; no longer conducted by the genius of Coligni, who had surmounted so many defeats and disasters; unsupported by a foreign force; and pressed by the superior weight of the crown, united to the party of the Catholics; the contest became too

March. unequal to be long maintained. Two armies, levied by the King, having marched against them, experienced a feeble resistance. The first was commanded by the Duke of Anjou in person, who, from their ally, had now become their most implacable opponent. Henry's jealousy of the Duke of Guise, excluded him from conducting the second army, which was committed to his brother, the Duke of Mayenne.

Success of the royal arms. An uninterrupted series of success attended both these bodies of forces. La Charité, one of the most important military posts in the kingdom, as it formed a passage across the

May. Loire, which might have facilitated the entry

[k] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 471—474, and 478. Davila, p. 469 and 470.

of

of a German army into France; surrendered, after a short siege, to the Duke of Anjou. His victorious troops, unopposed, even penetrated into Auvergne, the most central, mountainous, and inaccessible province of the kingdom; invested the town of Issoire, and having entered it at the breach, reduced the place to ashes. The garrison was sacrificed to the ferocity of the soldiers. Nor was the Duke of Mayenne's progress less rapid in Poitou. Brouage, which had been recently seized on by the Prince of Condé, capitulated after a long blockade: the Hugonot fleet, after having attempted to throw supplies of provisions into the place, was compelled to retire, not without previously sustaining a considerable loss; and even Rochelle itself, regarded as the asylum of the Protestant faith and party, appeared to stand in the most perilous situation. As a further increase of their misfortunes, Damville, who had long fluctuated in his political connections, alienated by some causes of misunderstanding which arose, quitted the confederacy, and turned his arms in Languedoc against his late allies. No effort worthy their former reputation, was made by any of the Hugonot chiefs. The nobility of that party, weary of the war, retired to their castles: the troops disbanded; while the people, reduced to poverty by the rapacity of a fierce and licentious soldiery, loudly demanded a termination of their accumulated calamities.[1]

CHAP. III.

1577. June.

August. Feeble exertions of the Hugonots.

[1] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 191—196. Davila. p. 471 and 472.

If

CHAP. III.

1577. Policy of Henry.

If Henry's policy or inclinations had permitted him to push his advantages over a party, broken and already vanquished, the Hugonots might have been reduced to accept any conditions however severe, which he had thought proper to impose on them. But, such a triumph, which would have been rather apparent than real, must have conduced more to the advantage of the house of Guise, as the concealed chiefs of the League, than either to the grandeur or stability of the throne. The Catholics themselves who preserved their allegiance, and who were not disposed to sacrifice the public safety to the ambitious projects of the Duke of Guise, betrayed the most anxious desire for peace. Encouraged by these symptoms of the national approbation, Henry, after a short negociation with the King of Navarre, concluded a treaty, which was afterwards ratified and published at Poitiers. It constituted the fifth accommodation which had been made between the two parties, since the commencement of the civil wars under Charles the Ninth. The articles, though far less favourable to the Protestants, than those of the preceding convention, yet established and admitted under certain restrictions, a toleration of religion. Its exercise was however interdicted within ten leagues of the metropolis, or in the immediate vicinity of the court. Eight cities were ceded to the Hugonots, as a guarantee for the execution of the conditions; but their restitution to the crown was stipulated, at the end of four years.

Conclusion of peace. September.

Various

Various regulations, calculated to introduce a degree of police, and to maintain general order, were inserted into the treaty.[m] CHAP. III. 1577.

The general satisfaction with which it was received by the majority of the nation, formed its best eulogium. The King, who regarded it as peculiarly his own work, denominated it with complacency, *his* peace; and the Prince of Condé did not manifest less impatience to publish it in the city of Rochelle. It may indeed be esteemed the wisest and most judicious measure of the whole reign of Henry the Third; and if that prince had improved the occasion which it presented him, of establishing a vigorous administration, "the League," notwithstanding its prodigious resources, might have been crushed before it attained to maturity[n]. But, the character of the King, as it became more fully unveiled to his subjects, far from inspiring respect, excited contempt, and even aversion. His profusion anticipated and exhausted the revenues. A succession of young male favourites, characterized by the same common rapacity, profligacy, and contempt of decorum, rendered the court a scene of indecent riot, or of scandalous dissipation. Catherine of Medicis, subservient to all the vices and weaknesses of her son, did not scruple, in defiance of her age, to be present at these festivities: while Margaret, Queen

Reflexions on that event.

Mal-administration, and vices of the

[m] Davila, p. 473 and 474. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 529—531. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 197 and 198. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 327 and 328.

[n] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 289—307.

CHAP. III. 1577.

of Navarre, her daughter, who had neither followed, nor rejoined the King her husband; lost to every sense of female honour or chastity, constituted the principal ornament of her brother's palace and licentious amusements. The prerogatives of the crown became odious, from the abuse of its powers. Taxes, varied by the ingenuity of pernicious ministers, and multiplied in a thousand shapes; while they exhausted the patience of the people, were insufficient to suffice for the prodigality of the sovereign. The mixture of devotion which Henry affected, and the pilgrimages or processions in which he continually engaged, only served to render his enormities more conspicuous, and to call in question the sincerity of his attachment to religion itself. His brother, the Duke of Anjou, however exempt he might be from some of the worst imputations thrown on the King, formed scarcely more an object of public esteem. Like Henry, he was inconstant, capricious, and destitute of principles of virtue; plunged in excesses of libertinism; equally enslaved by favourites; and incapable of sustaining the majesty of the throne, to which his birth, and the King's want of issue, rendered it probable that he might eventually be called. These defects and vices of the two last princes of the house of Valois, still more than the great qualities by which the Duke of Guise was distinguished, gradually prepared the minds of the people for the convulsions that followed; and when matured by time, left the crown exposed to all the enterprizes

Conduct of the Duke of Anjou.

prizes of ambition, aided by the violence of rebellion. [o]

CHAP. III.

1578.

France meanwhile, was far from enjoying the internal repose, which the peace concluded at Poitiers, ought to have naturally produced throughout the kingdom. Religious antipathy, superior to the force of edicts, or to the restraints of law, continued to arm the inhabitants against each other. The intolerance characteristic of the age, could not allow either liberty of opinion, or of practice, in matters of conscience; and the long habits of civil war had rendered the people sanguinary, suspicious, and cruel. Damville, who exercised a species of independant jurisdiction in his government of Languedoc, where he might be said to act as a petty sovereign; on various pretences refused to disarm, and even maintained hostilities against the Protestants. Lesdiguieres, who commanded the Hugonot forces in Dauphiné, had not forgotten the recent execution of Montbrun, under whom he had carried arms; and he did not trust sufficiently either the faith of the King, or the sanction of treaties, to divest himself of his military protection [p]. Many acts of outrage and violence were committed with impunity in the provinces. The court itself, after exhibiting every species of luxurious and dissolute entertainment, became in turn a theatre of discord and of blood. These sudden transitions, which originated in the King's misconduct, ex-

Internal commotions of France.

[o] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 199.

[p] Davila, p. 474.

CHAP. III.

cited little surprize. His brother, the Duke of Anjou, dissatisfied with the treatment which he received, and apprehensive of being again arrested by the government, withdrew a second time, quitted Paris, and retired into Normandy; from whence he sent assurances of his loyalty and obedience to the crown. But a more serious and tragical event, which took place at this time, made a deep, though only a temporary impression on Henry's mind. From the period of his accession, he had been always governed by favourites, who succeeded each other in their master's affections, with amazing rapidity. Bellegarde had been supplanted before the King's arrival at Lyons; and du Gua, who next occupied his place, was assassinated within a year, during the plenitude of his power. The vacancies were quickly occupied by new candidates. Villequier, one of the most corrupt and profligate companions of the King's pleasures, presided over the department; and the royal favour was divided between those individuals whom he presented, or recommended to his sovereign. As they were all in the bloom of youth, distinguished by the graces of person, and naturally elated with their good fortune; perpetual quarrels took place between them and the adherents or retainers of the great nobility, who filled the court.

1578. February. Retreat of the Duke of Anjou from court.

Royal favourites.

Duel of Quelus and Entragues.

Quelus, one of Henry's minions, having challenged Francis d'Entragues, a young man of quality, attached to the Duke of Guise; the combatants, each accompanied by two of his friends,

friends, met in one of the most public places of the capital, in order to terminate the dispute. The seconds manifested the same ardor and animosity, as the principals. Of the six individuals engaged, two were left dead upon the place: one expired on the following day; and Quelus himself, pierced with nineteen wounds, languished near a month before he breathed his last. The indications of affection exhibited by the King towards him, during the course of his malady; as well as the demonstrations of his sorrow for the death of Quelus, and of Maugiron, another of his favourites who had fallen in the same duel, were equally indecent and unmanly. They may be compared with Alexander's lamentations for the loss of Hæphestion, or the distress of Hadrian on the decease of Antonius. Henry embraced their dead bodies; ordered them a public funeral, at which all the courtiers assisted; received compliments of condolence, as for the loss of princes of the blood; and appeared to be for some time inconsolable[q]. Incapable nevertheless of any permanent emotion, he soon recovered his usual gaiety, and obliterated the recollection of the deceased, in the society of new favourites. But, the injurious impressions made by his conduct on the minds of the people, were not effaced with the same facility. Proofs of contempt and even of indignation, appeared in many parts of the kingdom; and the profu-

CHAP. III.

1578. April.

General discontent of the kingdom.

[q] Etoile. Journ. d'Henry III. p. 92. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 725—728. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 201 and 202.

CHAP. III.

1578.

sion with which offices, dignities, and emoluments were conferred on the unworthy associates of his looser hours, while it exhausted the public treasure, encreased the general dissatisfaction. The states of Burgundy, in a high-spirited remonstrance, ventured without disguise to arraign in severe terms, the King's profusion; enumerated their grievances, and specified the adequate remedies. Henry dissembled his resentment at so bold an attack, which he attributed to the princes of the house of Guise; and he was even reduced to the painful necessity of employing the intervention of the Duke of Mayenne, Governor of the province, in order to allay the discontent of the nobility and of the states. These seeds of national discontent were not however eradicated, and time gradually matured them to the most alarming degree.[r]

November.

Affairs of Portugal. Enterprize of Sebastian.

While the vices of Henry, which a powerful faction placed in the most conspicuous and odious point of view, silently prepared a great convulsion in France; an ardent and ill-regulated thirst of glory in Sebastian, King of Portugal, produced the destruction of that flourishing monarchy. Having determined to undertake an expedition to the opposite coast of Barbary, for the purpose of restoring to the throne Mahomet, who pretended to the sovereignty of Fez; no obstacles could prevent, nor remonstrances dissuade him from his imprudent

[r] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 729—731.

resolution. After surmounting, not without difficulty, numerous impediments, he at length embarked from the Tagus, at the head of a numerous squadron, and a considerable army. Muley Moluc, the African prince against whom his efforts were directed, endeavoured to avoid the contest, and even made offers for an accommodation. But, the temerity and imprudence of Sebastian, rendered him incapable of discerning his own interest, or of listening to any considerations except romantic schemes of conquest. Landing in Africa, he engaged in a general action near the town of Arzila, where his troops, ill disciplined, outnumbered by the enemy, and surrounded on all sides, were either cut to pieces, or captured by the Moors. Sebastian himself, after having given proofs of the most desperate valour, perished, or at least disappeared in the engagement. Mahomet, whom he had vainly attempted to place on the throne of Fez and Morocco, was drowned in his flight from the field of battle: while Muley Moluc, attacked by a mortal disease, expired in his litter, at the moment of victory, before the event of the day was fully decided; having previously, with a sublime self-possession, laid his finger on his lips, in order to enjoin silence to his attendants respecting his decease. Hamet his brother succeeded to the supreme authority.[s]

CHAP. III.

1578.

August. His death.

[s] La Clede, Hist. de Portugal, v. ii. p. 58—72. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 599—634.

CHAP. III.

1578. Reign of the Cardinal Henry.

The consternation occasioned in Portugal by so lamentable a catastrophe, exceeded description; the actual calamity however great, being swallowed up in the contemplation of the more alarming consequences resulting from Sebastian's defeat and death. That young and unfortunate prince having never been married, the crown devolved to the only surviving male descendant of the royal line. Henry, Cardinal of the Romish church, and Archbishop of Evora, son to the celebrated Emanuel, had attained to his sixty-seventh year, when called to the throne. Adorned with many of the virtues which render a private station amiable, he possessed few of the qualities requisite in a sovereign; and his advanced period of life, together with his declining state of health, promised only a short, as well as a precarious reign. The succession in case of his demise, being claimed by many candidates, presented to the nation the prospect of a civil and foreign war; while the late disaster deprived them in a great degree of the means of defence against an enemy. Philip the Second, King of Spain, who stood in a near relation to Sebastian, by the marriage of Isabella, Princess of Portugal, with Charles the Fifth his father, already displayed his pretensions; and it was evident that the overwhelming superiority of his force, compared with the means possessed by any other claimant, must necessarily decide the contest in his favour.[t]

[t] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 72 and 73.

But,

CHAP. III.

1578.

Transactions in the Netherlands.

But, neither the terrors inspired by the Spanish power, which seemed to be on the point of receiving so vast an accession, by the probable conquest or acquisition of Portugal; nor the presence and talents of Don John of Austria, both of which were exerted to repress the insurgents; could restore any degree of tranquillity in the Netherlands. The affairs of that country, as well as their final result, appeared to become annually more complicated, perplexed, and doubtful. Don John, far from adducing any permanent remedy to the discontents of the Flemings, had by his conduct still more alienated and incensed them against the court of Spain. His first proceedings were notwithstanding, calculated to conciliate universal affection. By the advice of Escovedo, his secretary and minister, he confirmed the pacification of Ghent; and having caused the Spanish troops instantly to evacuate Flanders, he received anew the oath of fealty and obedience from the States, to Philip the Second. His entry into Brussels, as governor general, was marked with demonstrations of public joy; and during a short time, his administration seemed to rival in popularity the auspicious period, when his sister, Margaret of Parma, held the reins of state. But, the ambition of Don John, which could not be gratified by so limited an authority, led him speedily to repent of his facility in having dismissed the veteran soldiers, who had fought under the Duke of Alva, and under Requesens. Having seized therefore on the citadel of Namur, he prepared to regain the power which he had unwillingly ceded,

Measures of Don John of Austria.

CHAP. III. ceded, and to reduce the Flemings by force of arms. Irritated at such perfidious and violent
1578. treatment, the States called to their aid the Archduke Mathias, son to Maximilian the Second, and brother to the reigning Emperor Rodolph: while Don John, reinforced by the Spaniards whom his nephew, Alexander Farnese,
January. Prince of Parma, conducted from Italy, attacked and defeated the Flemings at the battle of Gemblours.[u]

The Duke of Anjou embraces the protection of the Flemings.

An event which seemed to threaten the entire reduction of the Netherlands to the obedience of Philip, and the consequent extinction of all their privileges, afforded a favourable occasion for the Duke of Anjou to offer his assistance to the distressed States. That prince, restless and ambitious, ill received at the court of Henry who feared and suspected him, odious to the Hugonots whom he had abandoned, and anxious to obtain an establishment beyond the limits of his brother's power; immediately sent a deputation, to make proposals for undertaking their defence and protection. His agents were received with gratitude, and treated with distinction. He himself, in order to accelerate the conclusion of a treaty which promised him
August. an entrance into the Low Countries, advanced to the city of Mons, capital of Haynault, where all the conditions were finally settled. He engaged to conduct to their assistance an army of ten thousand infantry, and three thousand cavalry; in return for which aid, the States

[u] Strada, de Bel. Belg. vol. ii. p. 321—404. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 545—573, and 649—661.

conferred

conferred on him the title of "Protector of the Belgic Liberties;" guaranteed to him the possession of certain places, as security for the execution of the articles; and promised to elect him for their future sovereign, if circumstances should compel them eventually to withdraw their allegiance from the King of Spain.* CHAP. III. 1578.

In consequence of this treaty, the Duke of Anjou having entered Haynault, at the head of a considerable military force, made himself master of several frontier towns, and excited the highest expectations of his future progress. But, he soon perceived the difficulties attending an enterprize, which demanded talents equally various and superior in their kind. His troops, composed promiscuously of Catholics and Protestants, long accustomed to the licentiousness of civil war, refused to submit to the necessary severity of discipline. The Flemings, disgusted and alienated by the excesses which the French soldiery committed, considered them as enemies, rather than as allies; and the places stipuated to be delivered to him, far from admitting him within their walls, shut their gates to oppose his entry. Incensed at the failure of the engagements contracted by the States, the Duke of Anjou withdrew again into France, after remonstrating with them on their treatment, and assuring them of his return. He even sent, previous to his departure, a detachment of three thousand men to join the army of the

He enters Haynault.

October.

Retreats.

* De Thou, vol. vii. p. 670 and 671.

Flem-

CHAP. III.

Flemings. The remainder of his forces, being no longer paid, immediately disbanded.[y]

1578. The ill success attending the enterprize of the Duke of Anjou, together with the victory lately obtained by Don John of Austria at Gemblours, might have restored the Spanish affairs in the Netherlands, if Philip the Second had extended immediate support to his brother. But that jealous and suspicious monarch, alarmed at the ambitious and extensive projects attributed to Don John; instead of supplying him with the requisite force to reduce the Flemings, left him in a state of total inability to maintain the war. The Spaniards, defeated in their turn, were compelled to retreat before the army of the States. Escovedo, who had been sent by his master to Madrid, with directions to urge the dispatch of troops and money, was assassinated in that capital, by the order, or at least by the consent of the King of Spain. Don John himself, exhausted by personal fatigue, and depressed by anxiety of mind, did not long survive these painful reverses.

Death of Don John. Having resigned the command of the forces to Alexander, Prince of Parma, he retired to Namur, where the struggles of a high-spirited and indignant mind, aiding the advances of

1st October. disease, he expired soon afterwards in the vigour of his age, having scarcely accomplished his thirty-third year. The affliction of his troops at the intelligence of his decease, mani-

[y] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 207—209. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 688—690.

fested

fested itself in a manner the most violent; and his contemporaries compared him to Germanicus, as they accused Philip of resembling Tiberius. The circumstances attending Don John's distemper and death, which were, though unjustly, attributed to poison; and the period of life at which he died, rendered the similarity with the son of Drusus, whose end is so eloquently depictured by Tacitus, more striking, and more complete. Philip confirmed the government of the Low Countries, to the Prince of Parma; and his great endowments, military as well as civil, which have ranked him with the first commanders of modern ages, rendered him worthy of so arduous a situation. [k]

CHAP. III. 1578.

Prince of Parma made Governor of Netherlands.

During this period of time, when the attention of all Europe was attracted on one hand towards the fate of Portugal, and on the other, to the contest in Flanders; France offered few events which deserve to be commemorated by history. Henry, who might have improved the interval of repose afforded by the peace concluded with the Hugonots, in order to regain the esteem of his subjects, and to attack, while yet in their infancy, the dangerous designs of "the League;" made no exertions for his own preservation. Resigned to a life of indolence and pleasure, he abandoned the care of the state to his mother, and seemed to regard the royal dignity as only intended for the oppression of his people. Catherine of Medicis, whose virtues and whose

1579. Indolence of Henry.

Activity of the Queen-dowager.

[k] Strada, vol. ii. p. 466—471. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 696—698.

vices

CHAP. III.

1579. March.

vices were more active, visited in the name, and by the authority of her son, the different parts of his dominions. She negotiated with the King of Navarre in Gascony, for the maintenance of the treaty of Poitiers; which, after a long discussion, was explained by a number of secret articles, calculated to prolong the public tranquillity. Having traversed all Languedoc, and endeavoured to appease, or to extinguish the seeds of commotion in that extensive province, she arrived at Grenoble, the Capital of Dauphiné, accompanied by Damville; in which place she held a conference with Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. That able and enterprizing prince, unmindful of the obligations that he owed to France, had engaged deeply in projects injurious to Henry. Not content with having already obtained from him the restitution of Pignerol and Savillan, the Duke meditated the seizure of another contiguous territory, the marquisate of Saluzzo. Catherine, anxious to preserve for her son so valuable a possession, did not hesitate to pass the French borders, in order to hold an interview with Bellegarde, the Governor of Saluzzo; which took place at Montluel in the territories of Savoy. The conference terminated ineffectually; but Bellegarde's death happening soon afterwards, suspended the execution of Emanuel Philibert's designs for the aggrandizement or extension of his dominions. [a]

[a] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 217—220. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 75—84. Davila, p. 481—483.

While

CHAP. III.

1579.

While the Queen-mother thus exercised the real functions of a sovereign, Henry performed the contemptible pageantries of royalty. The creation of the order of the "Holy Ghost," which took place at this period, was designed by him to replace that of "St. Michael," originally instituted by Louis the Eleventh, but become venal and prostituted under the late reigns. The celebration of so public and splendid a ceremony, gratified the King's passion for expensive exhibitions; and he vainly flattered himself, that by associating to his new order, many of the highest nobility, he might attach to his person a number of adherents [b]. Inattentive as Henry appeared to every event of a public or national kind, he nevertheless betrayed on various occasions, a degree of sensibility, which proved that however indolence and flattery had corrupted his disposition, his mind was not totally destitute of elevation. He manifested the deepest regret, on being made acquainted with the death of Marshal Montmorenci, who from the purity of his public character, his rectitude and patriotism, obtained from his countrymen the glorious title of "the last of the French," as a similar denomination had been conferred in antiquity by the Greeks, on Philopœmen. During the rage of civil war, and the shock of opposite factions, he not only preserved his moderation, but exerted all his efforts to extinguish the flames of

Creation of the order of the Holy Ghost.

May. Death of Marshal Montmorenci.

[b] Davila, p. 481. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 215—217.

discord,

CHAP. III. 1579.

discord, by which France was desolated. Having become suspected by Catherine of Medicis, in the last months of the reign of Charles the Ninth, on account of his supposed adherence to the Duke of Alenson and the Hugonots, he had been committed to the Bastile: during his detention in that fortress, Henry, at the instigation of his mother, had issued orders to Souvré the governor, to strangle him; and he only owed the preservation of his life to the delays interposed by Souvré. His imprisonment, aggravated by the hardships that he suffered, advanced his end; and he expired of an apoplectic seizure, at fifty years of age. His death, peculiarly in the circumstances of the kingdom, might justly be accounted a national misfortune. Damville, his brother, succeeded to the title of Duke of Montmorenci.[c]

Henry takes under his protection, the city of Geneva.

Nor did the King manifest less regard to the interests of the French monarchy, on an occasion which called for his interference nearly at the same time. The little republic of Geneva, almost surrounded by the dominions of the Dukes of Savoy, derived the best security for its independance, from the alliance of the Swiss Cantons. It was believed that Philip the Second and Emanuel Philibert had entered into a treaty, the object of which was the conquest and partition of Switzerland. In order to effect such an enterprize, it became indispensable to commence by the reduction of Geneva; and

[c] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 162 and 163. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 84 and 85.

the

the ruinous consequences of the plan to France, if once carried into execution, were too obvious to need elucidation. Urged by the Cantons of Berne and Soleure, in the name of the Helvetic confederacy, to take the city of Geneva under his immediate protection, as an ally of the Swiss nation, Henry, after a considerable reluctance, complied with the request. Articles, calculated for the defence of Geneva against all external attack, were agreed on, and ratified by the King; who, in the troubles which he already anticipated from the adherents of "the League," knew that he should derive his surest military succours, from the affection and support of the Switzers. [d]

CHAP. III. 1579. May.

These transitory or capricious exertions were, unfortunately for himself and his people, preceded and followed by a complete dereliction of every public duty. The finances, committed to the most corrupt and profligate ministers, became annually more inadequate to the necessities of the crown; while the King expended in diversions or festivities, the produce of accumulated taxes, under which his subjects groaned. The Duke of Anjou, after again effecting his reconciliation with Henry, had in some measure postponed, though he had not abandoned, his projects on the Netherlands. The brave and celebrated La Noue, a Protestant, conducted a body of about three thousand French, who were appointed to act in con-

Dissolute conduct of the King.

[d] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 97—99. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 221 and 222.

CHAP. III.

junction with the army of the states of Flanders; while the Duke himself, excited by the hopes of marrying Elizabeth, Queen of England, had passed over with a very slender train, into that kingdom. Her reception of him proved so flattering, as to maintain him for a long time in illusive expectation of success.[e]

1579. August.

Internal commotions.

Towards the close of the year, alarming symptoms of the intention of the Hugonots to renew the civil war, began to manifest themselves throughout France. At an assembly of the Protestant churches, held by the King of Navarre in person, at Maziere in Gascony, it was publickly agitated to take up arms. Various pretended infractions of the last treaty were assigned, as the cause and justification of their conduct; and after considerable difference of opinion, it was finally determined, that if immediate redress was not obtained from the crown, they would endeavour to extort it by violent means. No resolution could have been more imprudent, if not unjust. Henry had not shewn any hostile disposition towards the Hugonots; and the edict of Poitiers had been executed, if not with strictness, yet in as literal and rigorous a degree, as could be permitted by the tumultuous state of the kingdom, and the disordered nature of public affairs. The Protestants themselves were divided among themselves, and almost defenceless. Neither the ardent zeal,

November.

Hugonots project to renew the war.

[e] Davila, p. 483 and 484. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 89. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 221.

nor

nor the religious and civil union, which had rendered them so formidable under Charles the Ninth, continued any longer to exist. Since the temporary combination into which they had entered with the Duke of Anjou and Damville, numbers of Catholics, and still greater numbers of men destitute of any principles of morals or religion, had united themselves to the party. The King of Navarre himself, though attached to his own faith by honour and by conviction, yet did not in his private conduct, observe even the appearances of decorum and morality.

1579.

State of the court of Navarre.

The little court of Nerac in Gascony, where he held his principal residence, in preference to the city of Pau, the capital of Bearn; constituted the center of pleasure, libertinism, and every species of gallantry. Margaret, Queen of Navarre, his wife, who had been brought thither by her mother Catherine of Medicis, gave, herself, the example of these excesses, which were imitated by the courtiers; and she even condescended on many occasions, to become subservient to her husband's amours, which she facilitated and conducted in person [f]. The Prince of Condé remained almost the only individual of distinguished rank among the Hugonots, who maintained the purity and fervour of the primitive reformers: but his power, revenues, and influence, were all too limited, to produce any considerable effect. He derived notwithstand-

Prince of Condé.

[f] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 222 and 223. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 344—346. Hist. de Margarite de Valois, p. 322 and 323.

CHAP. III.

ing a personal consideration from his intrepidity, activity, and indefatigable exertions in the cause. Impatient at the delays practised by the court of France, to prevent his entrance into Picardy, of which he formed only the nominal governor, the Prince anticipated the general resolution of his party to take up arms. Having quitted the city of St. John d'Angely in Saintonge, where he usually resided, he repaired in disguise to La Fere in Picardy, which place he surprized, and immediately garrisoned.[t]

1579.

November.

1580. Inactivity of the King.

Notwithstanding this demonstration of the discontent of the Protestants, Henry, relying on the promises and assurances which he had received from his sister the Queen of Navarre, that she would restrain her husband from proceeding to extremities, took no measures to counteract the projects of his Hugonot subjects. But, Margaret, who had undergone the most contumelious and humiliating marks of her brother's aversion, on various occasions, and whose vindictive disposition stimulated her to revenge; far from allaying, or soothing the passions of her husband, endeavoured to point them against the person by whom she had been offended. Her exhortations proved sufficiently powerful, not only to prevail on the King of Navarre, but to induce the principal persons in his confidence, to embrace the hazardous expedient of renewing the civil war. Regardless of their own inability to support so arduous an enter-

April.

[t] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 92.

prize,

CHAP. III.

prize, and impelled only by pretences of the weakest nature, they began their military operations. The King of Navarre, after dispatching messengers to his adherents in Languedoc and Dauphiné, to acquaint them with his ultimate resolution, instantly attempted to make himself master of Cahors, by surprize. That city, capital of the province of Quercy, constituted a part of the dowry of Margaret his wife; but the animosity of the inhabitants, who were zealously devoted to the Catholic faith, had always prevented his reception into the place. The garrison, notwithstanding the loss of their governor, who was killed at the beginning of the conflict, maintained a desperate resistance for several days; but the assailants, supported by the presence of their prince, who exposed himself to every danger, became at length victorious. Cahors was reduced to ashes; and every act of unrestrained barbarity was exercised by the Protestants, in retaliation for the massacre committed there under Charles the Ninth, eight years preceding, of which the Hugonots had been the victims. [h]

1580. King of Navarre takes up arms.

May. Capture of Cahors.

The astonishment of Henry, on receiving intelligence of the attack and capture of Cahors, was exceeded and lost in his indignation. Surmounting on this occasion his habitual indolence, he made immediate and vigorous pre-

Measures of the King.

[h] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 350—353. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 374—379. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 223—225. Davila, p. 487—489.

CHAP. III. 1580.

parations for punishing the audacity of his rebellious subjects. At the same time that he fitted out three considerable armies, destined to act against them in Dauphiné, Guyenne, and Picardy; he embraced a measure not less calculated to weaken and disarm their adherents.

June.

A declaration was published by the royal authority, confirming all the preceding edicts favourable to the Protestants, on condition of their remaining peaceable; and enjoining the civil magistrates to punish as traitors to their country, such as should molest them in any manner[i]. The effect of so wise and timely an act, was sensibly felt throughout the kingdom. Many persons who were sincerely attached to the reformed doctrines, had nevertheless disapproved the resumption of arms; and their disinclination was augmented, as well as justified, by the declaration issued on the part of the crown. La Noue, one of the most virtuous and respected of their leaders, who was occupied at that time in hostilities against the Spaniards in the Netherlands, condemned the war as manifestly unprovoked and unjustifiable. Rochelle itself refused to engage in it, and maintained a perfect neutrality. Other provinces declined to contribute towards, or to mingle in the controversy. Even in those parts of France, where the Hugonots were the most numerous or powerful, feeble exertions were made, and few successful enterprizes were effected.

Their effect on the Hugonots.

i De Thou, vol. viii. p. 387 and 395.

fected. It must be avowed, that of all the civil wars occasioned by religious animosity, since the conspiracy of Amboise under the reign of Francis the Second, this rupture was begun on the most insufficient pretexts, and is the least to be vindicated by an impartial historian.[k]

Its success, which perfectly corresponded to the principles on which it had been commenced, forcibly displayed the decay of the Hugonot power, enthusiasm, and resources. Lesdiguieres, who was reduced to retreat before the Duke of Mayenne in Dauphiné, scarcely maintained himself among the defiles and mountains of that inaccessible province. The moderation and clemency manifested by the Duke towards his enemies, completed the progress of his arms. In Picardy, the Prince of Condé not venturing to sustain a siege in the city of La Fere, quitted France, and embarked for England, where he hoped to derive supplies from the policy or the religious zeal of Elizabeth. Frustrated in his expectations, by the wise moderation of that princess, he crossed over into Germany; and returning through Switzerland into Dauphiné, after surmounting numerous impediments, he at length joined the forces of Lesdiguieres. Meanwhile Marshal Matignon, at the head of an army, invested and besieged La Fere. The camp was filled with the young nobility, who in crouds arrived from the court, to signalize their prowess. At their head, distinguished by

Success of the royal forces.

Siege of La Fere.

[k] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 225 and 226.

CHAP. III

the splendor of their equipage and train, appeared the two favourites of Henry; Arques, and La Valette; who are better known in history by the ducal titles subsequently conferred on them, of Joyeuse, and of Epernon. They had already attained to the pre-eminence in the King's affections, and became the channel of every grace or preferment. After sustaining a siege of six weeks, the governor of La Fere capitulated on honourable conditions.[1]

1580.

September.

King of Navarre is pursued by Biron.

The King of Navarre, who had imprudently engaged in a war so much above his strength or resources, proved not more fortunate than his confederates. Unable to collect under his standard, or to maintain in the field, any considerable body of troops; compelled to retire before Marshal Biron, who having passed the Garonne, entered Gascony; destitute almost of a guard for the protection of his person, he was necessitated to take refuge in Nerac. Biron approaching the place, drew up his army, and even fired some vollies of cannon against the town; while the Queen of Navarre, like Helen, as she is described in the "Iliad," standing on the walls of Troy; attended by the ladies of her court, occupied the watch towers and battlements, as spectators of the scene. But, it was not the intention of the King of France, to reduce to the last extremities, a prince so nearly allied to him by blood and marriage, in whom he beheld the only counterpoise to the power

September.

[1] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 396 and 397. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 227. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 367—370.

of

of the Guises and "the League." Biron, after displaying his superior force, withdrew form the vicinity of Nerac; and a fall from his horse, which rendered him for some time incapable of personally commanding the troops committed to his charge, tended to impede his further progress.[m] CHAP. III. 1580.

In this desperate extremity of his affairs, the King of Navarre owed his extrication, to the interposition of the Duke of Anjou. That prince having already accepted the offers of the States-general of the Netherlands, by which, under certain conditions, they agreed to delegate to him the sovereignty, of which they had deprived Philip the Second; anxious to obtain the assistance of the Hugonots, mediated their accommodation. The Queen-mother, willing to aid the ambitious views of her youngest son, having joined her powerful intercession; Henry who only desired repose, easily consented to open a treaty with his brother-in-law. It was conducted at the castle of Fleix in Perigord, and suffered little impediment or delay. The articles of the preceding peace were renewed with some variation; and France, after a war of only a few months, was restored to tranquillity.[n] Conclusion of peace. November.

No part of Europe, during this period, was so constantly desolated, or suffered such numerous and rapid revolutions, as the Netherlands. The Spanish affairs, which at the de- Affairs of the Low Countries.

[m] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 364. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 389—393. Davila, p. 490 and 491.

[n] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 399. Davila, p. 491. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 384. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 230.

cease

CHAP. III. 1580.

cease of Don John of Austria, appeared to be almost beyond recovery, were speedily retrieved by the vigour and capacity of the new governor-general. Not discouraged at the total want of pecuniary resources, the general desertion of the provinces, or the superior military force of the enemy; the Prince of Parma supplied every defect, by the energy of his mind, the promptitude of his movements, and the superiority of his genius. Equally fitted for the cabinet and for the field, his comprehensive talents embraced either department. Severe in the camp, he was mild and gentle in every act of private life; and his clemency proved still more effectual in subduing, or regaining the Flemings, than even his transcendent military capacity. The states of Brabant and Flanders having proceeded to form a new and closer union with William, Prince of Orange, for their mutual defence; the provinces of Haynault and Artois, apprehensive of the complete subversion of the Catholic religion to which they were warmly attached, began to exhibit a disposition to return to the obedience of Philip the Second. These favourable symptoms were encouraged and ultimately matured, by the wisdom and prudence of the Prince of Parma.

Character of the Prince of Parma.

The Walloon provinces return to the obedience of Spain.

At the same time that he undertook the siege of Mastricht, in order more effectually to preclude the future entry of German armies into the Low Countries; he continued, and concluded a treaty, by which, on condition of dismissing the Spanish troops, the Walloon

provinces, comprehending Artois, Haynault, the city of Lisle, and several subordinate places, submitted anew to Spain. Mastricht, after a siege of four months, being entered by storm, the garrison and inhabitants were put to the sword, and the city completely reduced. The progress of the Spanish commander was aided by the dissentions of the states of Flanders, caused by religious disputes; and his recent accommodation with the Walloons, shook to its basis, the independence of the Flemings. Having, not without extreme reluctance, and after many delays, completed the evacuation of the Netherlands by the Spanish soldiery, in compliance with his engagements, he formed a new army with incredible celerity. La Noue, who commanded the combined forces of the States and of France, after performing the most distinguished services to the Duke of Anjou's cause, was defeated and taken prisoner. The Spaniards regarding themselves as invincible under the Prince of Parma, carried terror through every part of the Netherlands; and if Philip the Second had not, in his ardor to attain the crown of Portugal, which had become vacant by the decease of the Cardinal King, withheld the necessary supplies of money from his general in the Low Countries; an universal submission of those provinces to their antient sovereign, might probably have been effected. °

CHAP. III.

1580.

Progress of the Spanish general.

June.

° Strada de Bel. Belg. vol. ii. p. 1—277. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 100—122, and 316—366.

Under

CHAP. III.

1580. Treaty between the Flemings and the Duke of Anjou.

Under these alarming circumstances, the Prince of Orange strenuously exhorted the States not to delay the conclusion of a treaty with the Duke of Anjou, as forming the only competent barrier against the further inroads of the Spanish general. Its termination was accelerated by the voluntary renunciation on the part of the Archduke Mathias, of the post of governor of the Netherlands, to which he had been called, and which he had, in effect, only nominally occupied down to this time. That prince, neglected by the Flemings, who had invited him into the Low Countries; and possessing neither talents, authority, nor personal consideration, withdrew soon afterwards into Germany. The definitive treaty between the Duke of Anjou on

August. one side, and the states of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zealand, and Friesland, with whom the cities of Antwerp and Mechlin were joined, on the other; was finally adjusted at the castle of

Articles of the treaty. Plessis near Tours. The sovereignty of those rich and commercial provinces was conferred on him and his posterity, upon the condition of being annexed to, but not incorporated in, the French monarchy; together with a reservation of all their privileges and immunities. An army, to which the contracting parties agreed jointly to contribute, was stipulated to be immediately levied for their defence and protection. The peace between Henry the Third and his Hugonot subjects, became the consequence of this treaty, which the Duke of Anjou exerted every effort to carry into vigorous execution.

execution. Having obtained the indirect approbation of the King his brother, he issued orders to levy troops in every part of France. [p]

CHAP. III.

1580.

If the capacity and energy of the French prince had equalled his good fortune, a considerable portion of those opulent and maritime countries, extending from the frontiers of Picardy and Champagne, to the mouth of the Emms and the Weser, might have been transferred from Spain to the house of Valois. Their possessor would have been scarcely less powerful than the Burgundian princes of the same line, in the preceding century, Philip the Good, and Charles the Bold; both of whom might, from the extent, fertility, and wealth of their dominions, compete with the greatest European sovereigns, their contemporaries. But the Duke of Anjou, like his predecessor the Archduke Mathias, only represented the empty pageant of a sovereign, and was unqualified to effect so arduous an atchievement, as the expulsion of the Spaniards from the Netherlands. The essential authority of the state resided always in William, Prince of Orange, whose depth of policy and superior talents, had already cemented his independant supremacy over the two northern provinces, Holland and Zealand. Philip, irritated against him to the highest degree, and justly regarding as his peculiar act, the measure of calling in the Duke of Anjou, no longer imposed any restraint on the indignation

Impediments to the progress of the Duke of Anjou.

[p] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 336. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 228 and 229.

by

CHAP. III.

by which he was animated against his revolted subject. In a public Manifesto, dispersed by his command throughout all Europe, he proscribed and devoted to destruction the Prince of Orange; stigmatized him with the odious epithets of traitor, rebel, and heretic; exposed his estates to pillage; and finally offered a reward of twenty thousand Ducats, to any person who should bring him, dead or alive. William, neither terrified nor depressed by this proscription, replied to it by the memorable apology that bears his name; a work which in energy of composition is not inferior to the most celebrated works of Greek or Roman antiquity. It was transmitted to the different European courts, and covered Philip with opprobrium, by the severe display which it contained of his vices, crimes, and enormities.[q]

1580. June. Manifesto of the King of Spain.

December.

Affairs of Portugal.

While the fate of the Netherlands remained still uncertain, the destiny of Portugal was already decided. The insatiable ambition of Philip was gratified by the addition of a new kingdom together with the acquisition of all the rich colonies possessed by the Portuguese in Asia. The vast discoveries made by Gama, and the extensive conquests effected by Albuquerque, thus transferred to the house of Austria, were lost in the enormous mass of the Spanish monarchy. The reign of the Cardinal Henry, who had succeeded to the unfortunate Sebastian, proved only of short continuance.

January.

[q] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 362 and 363.

He

He expired, after having ostensibly held the sceptre scarcely seventeen months. The period was notwithstanding of sufficient length, to have secured in some measure the independance of his country and his people, if he had named a successor, under whom Portugal might still retain her existence as a monarchy. But the feeble age, and procrastinating or indecisive character of Henry, instead of terminating the contest between the various candidates, left the matter open to litigation. Catherine, Duchess of Braganza, daughter of a son of the great Emanuel, King of Portugal, appeared to possess a claim superior to any other person. It was nevertheless contested by Anthony, son to Louis, Duke of Beja, second son of Emanuel; whose title would have been indisputable, if his asserted illegitimacy had not seemed to exclude him from the throne. Even this circumstance, which was not positively established on incontrovertible evidence, might have been surmounted, if Henry had not conceived for his nephew, the most implacable aversion. The crown of Portugal had been worn by John the First, notwithstanding a similar defect in blood; and the people, who pretended to the ultimate right of decision, where the claim was doubtful, were almost unanimously attached to Anthony. But the great endowments of every kind, which had raised John the First to the throne, and maintained him in it during a long and victorious reign, were not to be found in his descendant. Philip the Second, at the head of all the forces

1580.

Indecision of the Cardinal King.

of

CHAP. III. 1580.

of the Spanish monarchy, prepared to enter the lists, as a competitor; and before the death of Henry, he had already begun to assemble troops upon the frontiers.[r]

Condition of the Spanish monarchy at this period.

Unequal as the contest might be esteemed between two states so dissimilar, yet the King of Spain laboured under many impediments, internal and foreign, which prevented him from exerting with vigour, his immense resources. In Arragon, as well as in Navarre, symptoms of disaffection had appeared. Naples and Milan groaned under the Spanish tyranny; while the Netherlands, in open revolt, defied the power, and drained the revenues of Philip. If the Portugueze had been united under any one leader, they might have rendered the attempt to subject the kingdom, difficult; perhaps impracticable. The eastern frontiers towards Estremadura, on which side the Castilians must necessarily enter, were covered with fortresses calculated to delay, or to defeat their operations. The clergy and the people, were zealously disposed to maintain the independance of Portugal; and the nobility, though seduced by the promises, or corrupted by the presents of the Catholic King, did not want either valour or patriotism. But, the dissentions of the kingdom, which prevented every combined effort for its preservation, delivered it over almost without resistance, to the invaders. The Duke of Braganza, timid and unpopular, having tamely

Dissentions in the kingdom of Portugal.

[r] La Clede, Hist. de Port. vol. ii. p. 72—89.

bartered

bartered the rights which his wife possessed, opened a negotiation with Philip. That artful prince did not lose the occasion of disarming and securing so dangerous a rival. The five administrators or regents, to whom the deceased King by his last will had committed the government, till the contested succession should be finally determined, either sold or abandoned their trust. No effectual opponent appeared except Anthony, whose title was disputable, and whose authority was not generally acknowledged throughout the country. The Duke of Alva, recalled by Philip from his castle where he had been confined during some time, in a state of disgrace; assumed at more than seventy years of age, the command of the army destined to effect the conquest of Portugal. The high military reputation which he had acquired in Flanders, and perhaps even the severity of his natural disposition, recommended him to a monarch, who throughout the whole course of his reign, governed more by terror, than by affection. Wherever the Spanish commander appeared, treachery, fear, or disaffection, opened to him the cities; and he penetrated, almost unopposed, to the gates of Lisbon itself. Having taken St. Ubes, a place situated on the Atlantic, one of the most important fortresses in the kingdom; and afterwards by a masterly and rapid movement, having crossed his forces over the Tagus, he prepared to invest the metropolis.[s]

1580.

Entrance of the Duke of Alva into Portugal.

June.

His progress.

[s] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 89—120. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 221—270.

CHAP. III.

1580. Ineffectual efforts of the Prior of Crato.

Under these circumstances of danger and depression, Anthony did not however abandon the contest; but, of the many personal qualities indispensable to maintain him against so vast a disparity of force, he possessed only the virtue of courage. He even manifested a character deeply tinged with cruelty, treachery, and the most odious or degrading vices. Incapable of commanding the services, or compelling the attendance of the nobility, he trusted his cause to a licentious populace, who committed every act of violence with impunity, and desolated the capital by their excesses. His army, deficient in discipline, and entirely composed of the vilest of the people, inflamed by the exhortations of Monks, scarcely waited to be attacked by the Duke of Alva; and after a short resistance, fled on all sides. Lisbon having instantly capitulated, admitted the Spaniards; while Anthony, reduced to wander through the provinces, and concealed by his adherents, at length found means to escape from a kingdom, the misfortunes of which he had only aggravated by an ineffectual opposition. After eluding every attempt which Philip made to gain possession of his person, and receiving the most incontestable proofs of the disinterestedness and attachment of his countrymen, who disdained the rewards offered by the court of Madrid, for his apprehension; he embarked with a few attendants, from St. Ubes, and landed safely in France.[t] In all these particu-

August.

His flight.

[t] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 121—128. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 271—280.

lars

lars of his life, the Prior of Crato presents a striking similarity to the late Charles Edward, grandson of James the Second, who experienced in the last century, the same misfortunes, and the same inflexible adherence on the part of the Scots, which the Portugueze had displayed towards Anthony. CHAP. III. 1580.

France was liberated from one of its most formidable enemies, nearly at the same period, by the death of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, who expired in the vigour of his age, having only attained his fifty-second year. Conscious that the indolence and mal-administration of Henry the Third, were rapidly preparing a great revolution in his dominions, Emanuel Philibert already made dispositions for profiting of the dissentions of the kingdom. Though the death of Bellegarde had frustrated, or at least postponed his designs upon the Marquisate of Saluzzo; he did not renounce his projects of still further augmenting and aggrandizing his power, at the expence of France. All his political and ambitious views survived in his son Charles Emanuel, who succeeded to his father's courage and capacity, as well as to his territories. The sixteenth century, fertile in illustrious princes, did not produce any individual of that high rank, more distinguished than Emanuel Philibert His good fortune in re-establishing himself as Duke of Savoy and Prince of Piedmont, from both of which countries his predecessor had been expelled; was equalled by his magnanimity, elevation of mind, Death of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. August. His character.

CHAP. III. 1580.

and talents for government. If we except the intolerant and persecuting spirit, which might be deemed more the vice of the age, than of the individual, and which stimulated him to undertake by violence, the conversion of his Protestant subjects; he seems to have been free from almost every defect which could materially affect the happiness of his people. His superior military talents did not render him less disposed on that account, to cultivate the arts of peace; and under his administration, uninterrupted tranquillity was preserved thoughout his contracted and exposed dominions; while France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and many of the finest countries of Europe, were involved in all the calamities attendant on war. We may regard his reign as the era from which Savoy dates its political existence as a state; and the troubles by which France was soon afterwards agitated, enabled his successor to adopt, and nearly to execute, the most extensive projects of ambition.[u]

[u] Guichenon, Hist. de Savoye, vol. ii. p. 696 and 697. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 230 and 231.

CHAP. IV.

Internal state of France.—Profusion and mal-administration of the King.—Entry of the Duke of Anjou into the Netherlands.—His first exploits.—He passes over into England.—Submission of Portugal to Philip the Second.—The islands of the Azores adhere to Anthony.—Return of the Duke of Anjou to Flanders.—Attempt to assassinate the Prince of Orange by Jauregny.—Conspiracy of Salcede.—Naval expedition to the Azores.—Defeat of Strozzi.—Operations in the Low Countries.—Attempt of the Duke of Anjou upon Antwerp.—Consequences of it.—Retreat of that prince into France.—Indolence, and vices of Henry.—Institution of the order of the penitents.—Symptoms of an insurrection in France.—Second enterprize against the Azores.—Progress of the Prince of Parma in Flanders.—Death of the Duke of Anjou.—Assassination, and character of William Prince of Orange.

CHAP. IV.

1581.

State of France, and of the court.

WHILE on one hand, the Duke of Anjou having ratified the treaty with the Flemings, assembled his forces in order to enter the Netherlands; and, while Philip the Second, in another quarter, prepared to take possession of Portugal, already subjected; Henry, neither occupied by schemes of conquest, nor by systems of legislation, abandoned himself to a disgraceful indolence. Equally insensible to the incitements of glory, or to the dictates of policy; neglectful of the interests, honour, and

CHAP. IV.

1581.

prosperity of France; improvident even of his own future repose, to the enjoyment of which he made so many sacrifices; he saw without emotion or effort, the formation of that political storm, in which he was eventually swallowed up and lost. The partizans of "the League," reserving for a more propitious moment, the full disclosure and execution of their plan, silently laboured to cement and consolidate all its component parts. The sterility of the Queen of France, and the general opinion diffused among the people, of the King's inaptitude for the purposes of marriage, involved the prospect of the succession, in great uncertainty. The Duke of Anjou, presumptive heir to the crown, was not yet married; and even if he should prove successful in his suit to Elizabeth, Queen of England, the age of that princess made it highly improbable that she should ever produce issue. Henry, King of Navarre, first prince of the blood, remained equally destitute of any legitimate offspring; and his religion formed of itself, an almost insuperable obstacle to his ever ascending the throne.

Projects of the Duke of Guise.

Profiting of so many favourable concurring circumstances, the Duke of Guise, whose ambitious views already seem to have embraced the future attainment of the crown itself, as a possible event, began to disclose a part of his vast and extensive plan. Among the princes of the blood royal, Charles, Cardinal of Bourbon, younger brother of Anthony, and uncle of Henry, successively kings of Navarre, occupied

CHAP. IV.

cupied a distinguished rank. Endowed by nature with only a limited capacity, and of a superstitious disposition, he was yet by no means insensible to the allurements or seductions of ambition. Sinking in years, and precluded by the priority of his nephew's pretensions, from any expectation of attaining to the sovereignty of France, in case of the entire extinction of the reigning house of Valois; he lent a ready ear to the suggestions of the Duke of Guise, who flattered him that his adherence to the Catholic faith, rendered him the only prince whom the nation would permit to sway the sceptre. Won by these artifices, he forgot the antient enmity of his family to the Guises, and suffered himself to be made the dupe, as well as the instrument, of all their purposes.[a]

1581. He gains the confidence of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

Amidst such various and augmenting sources of national confusion, the King not only prosecuted his accustomed diversions, but even encreased his ordinary expences. The court was no longer filled with counsellors of State, and crowded with antient nobility, as it had been under Henry the Second, and under Francis the First. Young and insolent favourites, raised by Henry, and promoted to the highest dignities, military as well as civil, eclipsed and expelled the natural attendants on his person. The indecent and unrestrained marks of royal affection, prostituted on these minions, excited indignation, and were attri-

Profusion and misconduct of the King.

[a] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 553.

CHAP. IV.

buted to the most disgraceful motives. Not satisfied with raising Arques and La Valette, from private gentlemen, to the rank of dukes, and attempting to establish their pre-eminence above the oldest peerages of the kingdom; he destined for them the two princesses of Vaudemont, allied to the reigning house of Lorrain, and sisters to the Queen. The first of the two matches was actually accomplished; and Henry presented to the bride, the same portion which was usually given to a princess of France, amounting to three hundred thousand Ducats. The marriage of the Duke of Epernon was delayed, on account of the youth of the princess intended for his wife; but, Henry did not the less order a sum of equal magnitude to be paid by anticipation, to the future husband. Enormous as such prodigality appeared, it was lost in the still greater profusion exhibited at the celebration of Joyeuse's nuptials, which exceeded twelve hundred thousand Ducats[b], and were solemnized with more than royal magnificence.[c]

1581. Minions of Henry.

Rapacity and oppression of the government.

A dissipation of the public treasure so odious in itself, and which seemed to impeach, not only the King's conduct, but even the sanity of his intellects, could not be maintained without laying proportionate burdens on the people. Every onerous and oppressive imposition, which the pernicious ingenuity of Italian financiers could devise, was accumulated upon the sub-

[b] A sum equal to five hundred thousand pounds sterling.

[c] Etoile, Journ. d'Henry III. p. 130. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 550 and 551.

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ject. In defiance of the reluctance and opposition displayed by the parliament of Paris, a number of new pecuniary edicts, not short of twenty-seven, were registered in one day. By a single edict of the list, twenty places of counsellors, in addition to those already existing, were created. Henry was necessitated to appear in person, in order to vanquish the repugnance manifested by the parliament, to sanctify such a violation of justice and of good government. With a view to supply his excesses, and the rapacity of his favourites, venality was openly introduced into the magistrature, the courts of justice, and all the dignities or offices of the kingdom. The patience of the nation, thus wantonly trampled on, began to be nearly exhausted; and even those individuals whose loyalty and attachment to the crown remained unshaken, yet foresaw with apprehension the necessary consequence of the vices and profligacy of the sovereign.[d]

CHAP. IV. 1581. July.

During these transactions in France, the Netherlands exhibited a more animating and important scene, on which was fixed the attention of Europe. The superior talents and activity of the Prince of Parma, began gradually to re-establish the Spanish power on a solid basis, throughout all the rich provinces to the south of the Schelde and the Maese. His inviolable fidelity to his engagements, when added to the severity of his discipline, and his consummate

Exploits of the Prince of Parma, in the Netherlands.

[d] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 233—236. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 550.

military

CHAP. IV.

1581. military skill, rendered his troops invincible. Having taken Breda, and closely invested Cambray, the states of Flanders and Brabant, terrified at the rapidity of his progress, loudly invoked the Duke of Anjou to accelerate his march to their assistance. That prince having at length assembled a body of near ten thousand infantry, and four thousand cavalry, entered Artois, and advanced to the relief of Cambray, which had already suffered the pressure of famine. At his approach, the Spanish commander, whose forces were very inferior in number to those of the French, after having remained for some hours drawn up in order of battle, decamped, and retreated towards Bouchain. The event fully justified this cautious measure, to which in some degree may be attributed the subsequent ill success of the Duke of Anjou. His army, principally composed of volunteers and adventurers, equipped for a short and vigorous expedition, and who received no regular pay, was unfit for enterprizes of duration. Licentious, undisciplined, and subsisting principally by plunder, they alienated the people to whose aid they were arrived, and disbanded when weary of the campaign.[c]

Duke of Anjou enters Artois.

August.

State of his army.

The first success of the Duke of Anjou was notwithstanding such, as to awaken the sanguine expectations of his new subjects. Having made his triumphal entry into Cambray as a conqueror, he was received by the inhabitants,

His entrance into Cambray.

[c] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 238.

as

as their deliverer from slavery. The command of the place, together with the citadel, was conferred by him on Balagny, one of his followers. Pursuing his advantages, he drove the enemy from Arleux and Ecluse, besieged and captured Cateau in Cambresis, and seemed ready to penetrate into Brabant. If he could have once effected his junction with the forces of the States, and the army of the Prince of Orange, so great a superiority might have enabled him to give battle to the Prince of Parma, under highly favourable circumstances. But his soldiers already disgusted with the delays and impediments interposed to their progress, impressed with little respect or confidence in their commander, and disdaining all subordination, had deserted their standards. Apprehensive in his turn of being attacked by an enemy, whose vigilance and promptitude were fully known; he retired towards the French frontiers, having lost more than half his cavalry, and nearly an equal number of infantry. Incapable of renewing the attempt on Flanders, and still occupied by his pursuit of Elizabeth, he quitted his army, and passed over into England; to which court Henry the Third had dispatched a magnificent embassy, with the view of facilitating or accelerating his brother's nuptials. During his absence, the Prince of Parma, no longer restrained by the operations of so formidable an opponent, invested Tournay, rendered himself master of the place, after a siege of two months, and

CHAP. IV. 1581.

His troops disband.

September.

Duke of Anjou passes over into England.

November.

CHAP. IV.

and spread consternation over every part of Flanders and Brabant.[e]

1581. Reduction of Portugal to the obedience of Philip the Second.

Brilliant as was the success of Philip's arms in the Netherlands, conducted by his lieutenants; it was surpassed by the facility with which, in his own person he completed the subjection of the Portugueze. Wherever he appeared, the most profound obedience was manifested; and in the assembly of the states of the kingdom, held at the town of Tomar, he was proclaimed king with all the accustomed solemnities. The crown being declared hereditary in his family, an amnesty, from which Anthony and his principal adherents were excluded, was then published; and the privileges of the nation were confirmed. Continuing his progress, the new king entered Lisbon, was inaugurated with pomp, and received by the fickle and credulous populace, with loud acclamations. His deportment and measures on his accession, it must be admitted, were calculated to soothe the discontent, as well as to allay the apprehensions of his subjects. The Duke of Braganza was treated with external marks of consideration: the university of Coimbra, which had distinguished itself by the warmest opposition to Philip's claims, received notwithstanding, testimonies of his protection and forgiveness. Honours and employments were conferred, though with a sparing hand, on some of

April.

June. Philip enters Lisbon.

[e] Strada, vol. iii. p. 278—358. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 519—521. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 236—238.

the

the grandees; while the administration was vested in ministers of talents and discernment.[f] CHAP. IV. 1581.

Throughout the vast dependencies of Portugal, scattered over Asia, Africa, and the southern continent of America, no opposition was made to a revolution which extinguished its independance, and reduced the kingdom to a mere province of the Spanish monarchy. The numerous colonies planted on the coast of Guinea, the garrisons stationed along the shore of Barbary, at Madeira, and the islands of Cape Verd, all submitted without a murmur. Ataide, viceroy of the Indies, who might have repelled the utmost efforts of Philip, acknowledged his title; while the rich fleet returning from Goa, entered the Tagus, and brought to the Spanish monarch an immense accession of wealth, at the most critical juncture. Amidst so astonishing and general a submission, the islands of the Azores alone ventured to refuse obedience to Philip; and with the exception of only one island, adhered inflexibly to his competitor. Their position in the center of the Atlantic Ocean, nearly midway between the old, and the new world; together with the utility derived from the refreshments and shelter, which they afforded to the fleets from the Indies and Brasil, on their homeward-bound voyages; — these circumstances rendered their possession highly important. Philip, too wise not

Submission of the Portugueze colonies.

The islands of the Azores remain firm to Anthony.

[f] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 129—132. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 482—489.

to

CHAP. IV.

1581. to be fully sensible of their value, and too vigilant to lose a moment in attempting to reduce them; sent a squadron, commanded by Valdez, followed by a second, under Figueroa, to effect their conquest. But, the two expeditions proved completely unsuccessful. Valdez, repulsed in an attack upon Angra, capital of the island of Tercera, was reduced to fly before the inhabitants, after having sustained a considerable loss. Elated by their victory, they proceeded to the most violent excesses of rage against the Spaniards; nor did Figueroa, discouraged by the recent defeat of his predecessor, venture to renew the experiment. He returned therefore to Lisbon, in order to demand supplies; while the insurgents dispatched messengers to Anthony, then residing in the court of France, to assure him of their inviolable adherence, and to press for instant succour.[z]

Repulse of Valdez.

1582. The visit of the Duke of Anjou to England, was not accompanied with greater success, than had attended his former attempt to attain the hand of Elizabeth. She received him, indeed, with every demonstration of amity and affection; permitted the articles respecting their future nuptials, to be discussed; and even proceeded so far as to present him with a ring, in token of her fidelity and consent. But, these deceptive appearances, calculated to answer the political purposes of the Queen, and to retard, or to prevent an alliance between the French Prince,

Consequences of the Duke of Anjou's visit to England.

[z] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 132—135. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 490—494.

and a daughter of Philip the Second; were laid aside, when the object was attained. Wearied, if not disgusted with perpetual procrastination, and pressed by the importunity of the Prince of Orange, to revisit the Netherlands, where his presence was become necessary, he took leave of Elizabeth. Escorted by the English fleet, and attended by a number of the nobility, he set sail for the port of Flushing in Zealand; and after having made a short stay at Middleburg, capital of the province, he proceeded by sea, up the Schelde, to Antwerp. In that city he was solemnly invested with the dignity of Duke of Brabant. The States having sworn allegiance to him as their rightful sovereign, delegated to him the prerogatives exercised by their antient princes. He in return took an oath to govern by the established laws, and to respect inviolably all their privileges.[h]

CHAP. IV. 1582.

He returns to Flanders. February.

His investiture.

The general joy diffused by this happy event, which promised their entire emancipation from the tyranny of Philip the Second, was notwithstanding interrupted, and nearly extinguished, by an attempt made to assassinate the Prince of Orange. Jaureguy, a young Biscayan, allured on one hand by the rewards which the King of Spain offered, and stimulated by religious enthusiasm on the other, undertook to execute so detestable a deed. Having chosen the moment when the Prince, accompanied by his friends, had risen from table, and was preparing

Attempt to assassinate the Prince of Orange.

[h] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 600—605. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 240.

to

CHAP. IV.

1582. March.

to withdraw into his own apartment; Jaureguy discharged a pistol ball, which entering under his right ear, passed through his cheek. The wound, though severe, did not prove mortal: but the assassin having been put to death by those who were present, in the first transports of their indignation; a suspicion that the French, and even that the Duke of Anjou himself had authorized the commission of the act, spread universally through Antwerp. The citizens, who idolized the Prince of Orange, running instantly to arms, were about to take vengeance on the sovereign whom they had recently elected, before it could be ascertained from what quarter the blow had proceeded. Two accomplices of Jaureguy, Spaniards as well as himself, were either seized and executed, or took refuge in the Prince of Parma's camp; but the Prince of Orange recovering from his wound, the consternation occasioned by it, insensibly disappeared. [i]

Campaign in the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the campaign which began to open, produced no events decisive of the fate of the Netherlands. The Spanish general, notwithstanding his consummate knowledge of the art of war, found himself restrained by the want of forces, from undertaking to attack the enemy. Nor did the Duke of Anjou, whose troops were with difficulty retained under their standards, venture to hazard an engagement against a commander, whose reputation inspired terror and

[i] Strada, vol. iii. p. 366—370. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 608—614.

respect.

respect. In this situation, the Prince of Parma profiting with dexterity of the inroads made by the French on the provinces of Artois and Haynault, and of their inability to provide for their own defence without foreign assistance; obtained the consent of the Flemish nobility to demand from Philip the Second, the return of the Spanish bands. Their request was eagerly granted by the court of Madrid; while the Duke of Anjou, with equal impatience expected a powerful reinforcement from France, under the conduct of the Duke of Montpensier. [k] CHAP. IV. 1582.

That kingdom, since the treaty concluded with the Hugonots, continued to enjoy a fallacious and precarious repose, interrupted at intervals, by disturbances between the Catholics and Protestants, irritated against each other. The King, who was faintly actuated by sentiments of national glory or utility, rather permitted, than actively approved or supported, the enterprizes of his brother. Too indolent and too timid, to venture on so decisive a measuse as an open rupture with the Spanish monarch; he was nevertheless induced to lend an indirect assistance to every effort, which might impede or overturn the course of Philip's prosperity. Destitute of pecuniary resources, devoured by rapacious favourites, and little inclined to sacrifice his own tranquillity, to the gratification of the Duke of Anjou's ambitious views in Flan- State of France. Indolence of the King.

[k] Strada, vol. iii. p. 370—377. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 607. and 608.

CHAP. IV. 1582.

ders; Henry listened with coldness to his solicitations, and affected to maintain a strict neutrality. But the King of Spain was neither deceived by his protestations, nor mollified by his conduct. Taxis, his embassador at the court of France, had already entered into the deepest and most criminal intrigues, with the princes of the family of Guise; and an event which took place at this period, disclosed in their full extent, the enormity, as well as the treasonable nature of their designs.

Conspiracy of Salcede.

Among the numerous adventurers, whom the prospect of honour or advantage, attracted to the Duke of Anjou's court at the city of Bruges in Flanders, was an individual named Nicholas Salcede. Of Spanish extraction, he had been compelled to fly from France on account of his crimes, and might justly be suspected of adherence to the enemies of that country. But, Salcede having offered to the Duke a regiment levied at his own expence, ready to join the French troops, was received with caresses, and treated with distinction. The Prince of Orange, whose vigilant and penetrating mind was ever awake to the events that passed around him; having discovered that Salcede, on his way to Bruges, visited the Prince of Parma's camp; first entertained doubts concerning his intentions. Enquiry confirmed these suspicions; and some other indications of his guilt appearing, he was arrested, committed to prison, and strictly interrogated. His voluntary confession, made in presence of the Duke of Anjou,

July. His confession.

jou, revealed a plot so vast, so complicated, and involving such a number of eminent persons in the court of France, that it was judged indispensable to communicate the whole information to Henry the Third[1]. That prince, equally terrified and astonished at a disclosure which so nearly affected his own personal safety, caused Salcede to be transported to Paris, with every requisite precaution against his rescue or escape.

CHAP. IV. 1582.

On the arrival of the criminal, the King directed judges to examine him, and even condescended to be present himself, concealed behind a curtain, when Salcede was put to the torture. He varied at different times, in his depositions; denied, retracted, and again confirmed his original assertions; leaving the King and all his ministers, in a state of uncertainty as to the exact truth of many essential circumstances respecting the conspiracy. But, the existence and reality of a plot, which had for its object the dethronement of Henry, the extermination of the royal family, the introduction of the Spaniards, and the complete destruction of the French monarchy; was apparent and demonstrated. It appeared equally clear that the Guises, in conjunction with the Duke of Lorrain, were its immediate authors; that Philip the Second supported it with all his treasures; that many provinces of the kingdom had engaged in it; and that measures were embraced for carrying it into prompt and vigorous

[1] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 569—573.

CHAP. IV. 1582.

execution. Any sovereign less indolent than Henry, after so minute a disclosure of the pernicious schemes of his domestic foes, and foreign enemies, would have exerted some vigilance in endeavouring to prevent their further progress. But such was his credulous and supine security, that when his first impressions of terror had subsided, he resumed his ordinary course of amusements, and took no measure for averting the danger with which he was menaced on every side.[m]

Security of Henry.

This

[m] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 621—636. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 242—244. Busbeq. de Bong. letter 8th.

The most curious and interesting detail of Salcede's conspiracy, is to be found in De Thou. It is impossible, on a full consideration of all the circumstances, to doubt that the Duke of Guise had communicated to Salcede the leading facts, respecting the future projects of "the League." Not only a number of persons of the highest quality were enumerated by him, as acquainted with, or implicated in, the treasonable designs against the King and kingdom; but even several of those who had been raised, and peculiarly favoured by Henry. Among the latter, however incredible, appeared the Duke of Joyeuse himself. Salcede's retractation may impugn the truth of some facts; but cannot destroy the evidence of a deep and dangerous intention to subvert the monarchy, and deliver up France to Philip the Second. The conduct of the Duke of Guise, and the subsequent disclosure of the principles of his adherents, bear the strongest testimony to the general veracity of Salcede's depositions. The advice given to Henry, by Christopher De Thou, father to the celebrated historian, and who, as first president of the parliament of Paris, had been present at the examination of the criminal, was fraught with wisdom and sagacity. That virtuous and upright magistrate besought the King to detain Salcede in confinement, and by no means to put him to death. "If," said he, "the intentions "attributed to the Duke of Guise and his partizans, are false, their "future conduct will best evince their innocence: but if the allega-"tions of Salcede are true, they will be retained in awe, by the "consciousness of a witness being alive, who is acquainted with, "and can divulge the extent of their criminal projects." Henry was incapable of feeling, or of following, so judicious a mode of action. His indolence and aversion to trouble, made him desire to forget

1582. Enterprize against the Azores.

This fatal and inexplicable apathy must appear the more censurable, as notwithstanding his affectation of observing inviolate the peace with Spain, he had attempted to wound the Spanish monarchy in its most vulnerable quarter. Anthony, who claimed the crown of Portugal, after embarking from a kingdom in which his affairs were become desperate, obtained not only an asylum, but a support from the generosity of the French King. As his party still subsisted in the islands of the Azores, situate in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, he earnestly solicited a naval and military force, to effect their complete reduction; hoping from thence to make with

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forget a subject of such unpleasing reflexion; and those of his favorites or ministers, who had been involved in the accusation, urged the punishment of a traitor and calumniator. He was torn in pieces by horses, the King himself being present at his execution.

The death of the first president De Thou, who only survived this event, seven days, was accelerated, if not occasioned, by a deep and melancholy sense of the calamities, which he foresaw were about to overwhelm France; but which he could not avert. It was in vain that he warned Henry of the approaching and imminent danger: that infatuated monarch was deaf to his suggestions or exhortations. De Thou, only a few months preceding, had with a generous and manly boldness, withstood some of the oppressive taxes continually imposed; and he had the courage to warn the King, that "if those ruinous experiments were repeated, a revolt "would prove the infallible consequence." Henry, turning to his courtiers by whom he was surrounded, said with contempt, "the "poor old man is in his dotage." But when, only a few years afterwards, the sedition of Paris began to manifest itself, he discovered the irreparable loss which he had sustained in De Thou. He deplored it with tears; and while on every side he only beheld treachery, rebellion, ingratitude, or perfidy, he was frequently heard to exclaim, that "he was well persuaded, if the first president had "been alive, and at the head of the parliament, an insurrection "would never have taken place in the capital."

CHAP. IV.

1582. advantage, a new attempt for ejecting Philip from his recent conquest. Catherine of Medicis, whose predominant passion was ambition, and who had not even hesitated, on grounds the most absurd, to lay claim, herself, to the kingdom of Portugal; obtained leave from Henry, to equip in her own name, an armament adequate to the enterprize. A considerable fleet, on board of which were embarked five thousand soldiers, was fitted out from the harbours of France. The command being entrusted to Philip Strozzi, a Florentine of noble descent, one of the most intrepid and accomplished officers in the French service; not only Anthony himself, but a number of the young nobility eagerly crouded to partake of the honour and danger of the expedition. Philip, attentive to all the motions of so formidable a squadron, instantly prepared to meet it with an equal, or superior force. The Marquis of Santa Cruz sailed from the Tagus, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed fleet, nearly about the same period of time that Strozzi quitted the coast of Brittany: but the French arriving first at the place of their destination, the Azores, landed on the island of St. Michael, defeated a body of Spaniards, gained possession of the principal town, and drove the enemy to take refuge in the citadel. If the favourable moment had been vigorously improved, and the garrison, which was in want of provisions, had not been allowed to recover from their consternation, Anthony might

Naval force equipped, and sent to those islands.

Spanish fleet fitted out by Philip.

June.

5th July.

Success of the French.

might have rendered himself master of the fortress. Its consequence and importance were beyond calculation, the island of St. Michael being the only one of the Azores which remained attached to Philip; and the Spanish fleet possessing no other port, or place of refreshment and retreat. Unfortunately the occasion was lost, while Anthony amused himself by listening to the acclamations of a populace who saluted him king; and the arrival of Santa Cruz in a few days afterwards, soon changed the aspect of affairs.[n] CHAP. IV. 1582. 22d July.

An engagement becoming unavoidable between the two fleets, it was expected by both nations with equal impatience. The battle was long and obstinate, as the prize for which they contended, might be not less than the kingdom of Portugal. Strozzi behaved with the utmost valour, and if he had been sustained with the same firmness, must have obtained a decisive victory. But, the magnitude of the enemy's ships, compared with those of France, sustained by the superiority of their fire; when added to the treachery or cowardice of several French commanders, who never came into action, determined the fate of the day. Strozzi, wounded in the knee, and incapable of resistance, was presented to the Spanish admiral, who had the inhumanity to order him to be dispatched, and his body thrown into the sea. Two thousand of Naval victory of the Spaniards. 26th July.

[n] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 135—139. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 578—584.

CHAP. IV.

1582. Cruelties exercised by the Spanish admiral.

the French were killed, and eight of their vessels were captured on this memorable occasion. But the cruelty exercised by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, on the prisoners who survived, and who fell into his hands, while it tarnished so brilliant an atchievement, stamped indelible infamy on his name and nation. These unfortunate victims, to the number of near three hundred, among whom were many persons of quality and reputation, were conducted to Villa Franca, in the island of St. Michael. A scaffold having been constructed in the town, they were all deliberately put to death, with no other distinction except that the officers were beheaded, while the common soldiers suffered by the halter. In order to palliate or justify an act of such barbarity, the admiral pretended to consider the French as only pirates or corsairs, acting without any legitimate commission, and wantonly infringing the peace subsisting between the two kings. Even his own troops could not acquiesce in so base and savage a proceeding. They demanded with importunity and tears, that the French might be treated as prisoners of war: but Santa Cruz, inexorable, delivered them over to the executioners; and Philip expressed neither horror nor indignation, when he received the intelligence.*

It was the first general engagement fought

* La Clede, vol. ii. p. 139—142. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 247—249. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 585—593.

between

between any European nations, on the Atlantic Ocean, since the discovery of America by Columbus; and its consequences proved decisive of the fate of Portugal. Anthony, who had not been personally present in the action, took refuge in the island of Terceira, which still adhered to his cause. Inconsolable on hearing the news of Strozzi's defeat, he only recovered from the transports of his grief, to plunge into the most degrading excesses of vice and sensuality; thus manifesting a total want of those qualities essential to success in such a contest. After remaining near two months in this state, irresolute as to his future conduct, and destitute of all resource, he embarked a second time for France: while the Spanish admiral, satisfied with his victory, and cautious of remaining with his fleet too long in an exposed situation, equally distant from Europe and from America, returned in triumph to Lisbon.[p]

CHAP. IV.

1582. Incapacity of Anthony.

October.

While these great events took place upon the ocean, hostilities continued uninterruptedly in the Netherlands. Reinforced by the Spanish and Italian veterans whom Philip sent to his assistance, the Prince of Parma took the field at the head of thirty thousand troops; and attempted to oppose the entry of the French, who, under Montpensier and Biron, having embarked from Calais, had joined the Duke of Anjou at Dunkirk. The reinforcement which they conducted, did not fall short of eight

Affairs of the Low Countries.

Hostilities.

[p] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 250.

thousand

CHAP. IV.

1582. August.

thousand infantry and cavalry, composed of Switzers and Germans, as well as of the native forces of France. The Spanish general, nevertheless, did not hesitate to offer them battle; and even under the cannon of Ghent, to which they retired for protection, he obtained a considerable advantage: but the approach of winter, and the difficulty of subsisting two armies in a country already exhausted, produced an involuntary cessation of hostilities. Notwithstanding the exertions made by Philip, to enable the Prince of Parma to push the war with vigour, and the great augmentations of soldiery which he had received, that general found himself involved in almost insurmountable embarrassments. The court of Madrid, attentive to the preservation of Portugal, and occupied in sending fleets to the Azores, did not remit to the Low Countries sufficient sums for the payment of the numerous forces acting in that quarter. The provinces of Haynault and Artois, from which the principal supplies of provisions were derived, could no longer furnish resources. Famine desolated the Spanish camp, and reduced its numbers: while the Duke of Anjou, master of the rich tract extending from Ghent to Antwerp, and receiving constant succours from England and France by means of the sea, was not exposed to similar distress; and it was expected might open the ensuing campaign with a prospect of decisive advantages. But all these flattering appearances, which would probably have been realized in a few

Critical state of the Netherlands.

few months, were completely overturned by the rashness, folly, and presumption of that misguided Prince.[q] CHAP. IV. 1583.

His brother, Henry the Third, who, on account of the danger with which he was personally menaced by the conspiracy of Salcede, rather than from public considerations, had manifested some degree of emotion on the discovery of that event, appeared to be little affected by the defeat and lamentable catastrophé of Strozzi. Insensible in a great degree to national glory or shame, he neither betrayed resentment, nor attempted to take vengeance for so cruel an outrage. Equally indisposed to embrace the favourable occasion which presented itself, for diminishing the power of Philip in the Netherlands; he refused to listen to the entreaties and solicitations of the Duke of Anjou, who having already expended his revenues, and even contracted an immense debt, in the prosecution of his enterprize on Flanders, implored Henry's assistance. Every motive of affection, honour, and interest, should have impelled the King to support him in an attempt so beneficial to France, and so injurious to Spain. He was well aware that the court of Madrid, far from respecting either alliances of blood, or the faith of treaties, had kindled, and continued to feed the flame of civil dissention in his own dominions. Even the laws of nations, and the rights of humanity, had been

Apathy of Henry.

His neglect of the Duke of Anjou.

[q] Strada, vol. iii. p. 394—407. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 640—646. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 252 and 253.

violated

CHAP. IV. 1583.

violated in the treatment of the unfortunate prisoners taken at the Azores. Yet so many considerations could not rouse him to exertion, nor induce him to quit the disgraceful and ruinous sloth in which he remained sunk. Far from extending the necessary aid to his brother, which might have enabled him to become master of the Netherlands, and to enclose the Prince of Parma between two superior armies; Henry's favourites dictated to him a language of insult, in all his replies. The new Duke of Brabant was advised to take warning by the fate of his predecessor Mathias, who, after having been invited by the Flemings to assume their government and protection, had been disgracefully sent back to Vienna. It was added, that when the Duke should have repressed the insolent audacity of his subjects, extended the narrow limits of his authority, and secured its permanency by the seizure of some fortresses or cities of Flanders; it might then become expedient and practicable, to mix the sovereign and kingdom of France in his quarrel.[r]

Condition of that Prince's affairs.

Insinuations and exhortations of such a nature, however originating in aversion or contempt on the part of those by whom they were made, yet found too easy an access to the heart of a prince corrupted by flattery, destitute of principle, wounded by refusals, and stimulated by necessity. On repeated occasions he had experienced the insolence of the Flemings; and

[r] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 253. and 254.

at

at the assassination of the Prince of Orange by Jaureguy, his own person, as well as those of all his countrymen, had been involved in the most imminent peril, from the suspicions entertained of his having authorized or permitted the attempt. Continual disputes and altercations arose between the French and their allies; who, far from coalescing cordially, though engaged in one common pursuit, regarded each other as secret enemies. The Duke himself, surrounded by unprincipled and profligate men, who continually held up to him the comparison between the almost unlimited prerogative of a king of France, and the contracted power delegated to him as Duke of Brabant, inflamed and propelled him to encrease it by every possible means.

CHAP. IV. 1583.

Yielding to these pernicious suggestions, he, without communicating his design to the Duke of Montpensier or to Biron, who might have dissuaded him from so treacherous a breach of faith; issued orders to seize on the same day, a number of the principal places of Flanders. The enterprize was facilitated by the confidence reposed in the French, as auxiliaries; and it proved completely successful in the towns of Dunkirk, Dixmude, Alost, Menin, Vilvorden, and Dendermonde: but, at Ostend and at Bruges, the conspiracy was rendered abortive. Having reserved to himself the conduct of the attempt upon Antwerp, as the most important and arduous, the Duke marched out of the city on the day appointed, under

He determines to seize on principal cities of Flanders.

18th January.

CHAP. IV.

1583. Attempt upon Antwerp; pretence of reviewing his forces, who lay encamped in the neighbourhood. When he had reached the gate, the officers who accompanied him, began the attack; while the Duke proceeding to the camp, exhorted his troops to enter Antwerp, and to make themselves masters of the place. They obeyed with alacrity; and at the same time that their comrades seized on the cannon, they pushed forward to share in the pillage of so opulent a city. But, their own security became fatal to the enterprize; and some suspicions having been previously entertained of an intention to introduce the French, the citizens sounded the alarm, and rose in arms. The Prince of Orange, who occupied the citadel, being informed of the event, put himself at the head of a body of soldiers, attacked Fervaques, who commanded the Duke of Anjou's troops, took him prisoner, and committed him to custody. Dispirited by the loss of their chief, his followers gave way on all sides; and as the croud was such at the gate by which they had originally entered, that it became impossible to retreat, a prodigious slaughter ensued among them. Numbers were suffocated by the pressure of their companions; and a considerable time elapsed before the rage of the people, justly excited by so flagrant an act of perfidy, permitted any quarter to be extended to the French. Yet, equally placable when all further resistance had ceased, they displayed the utmost humanity in the treatment shewn to the wounded, and preserved the

unsuccessful.

sur-

1583.

survivors from injury. About one hundred citizens fell in the affray; but on the other side, more than twelve hundred individuals perished, among whom were included many persons of distinction. [s]

Carnage of the French.

During the commission of this tragical scene, the Duke of Anjou, little prepared for its disastrous issue, remained at an inconsiderable distance from the walls, and already anticipated in imagination the possession of Antwerp. He was accompanied by his principal officers, many of whom highly condemned the proceeding, as being equally dishonourable, and destructive to the interests of their leader. The cannon of the city, pointed by the inhabitants against him, and the sight of numbers of French, who precipitated themselves from the ramparts in order to effect their escape, conveyed to the Duke the first intelligence of the ill success of his attempt. Confused, dismayed, and covered with shame, he instantly withdrew to his camp, from whence he dispatched letters to the States of Flanders, extenuating the act; imputing it to the treatment which he had received, and the indignities that he had suffered; protesting his affection for the Flemings, and his repentance of the attack made on their freedom. No answer was returned on their part; nor would the Senate, though urged by the Prince of Orange to send provisions to the French army,

Conduct of the Duke of Anjou.

[s] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 32—40. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 255—258. Busbeq. de Bongars, letters 14 and 15. Strada, vol. iii. p. 412—425.

permit

CHAP. IV. 1583.

permit any supplies to be conveyed during several days. Such was their sense of indignation, that they even caused the sluices to be opened, inundated the whole country, and thereby reduced the Duke, in the midst of winter, to the last extremity of danger and famine.

He retreats to Dendermonde.

He was compelled, by a circuitous and hazardous march to gain Dendermonde, where he did not arrive without having lost many of his soldiers. [t]

Consequence of these proceedings.

The consternation and resentment, excited throughout Flanders and Brabant, by so daring an invasion of their liberties, from a quarter to which the people naturally looked for protection and support, was general, and difficult to be erased. Its effects proved no less subversive of the independance of those provinces, than they were ruinous to the newly-acquired dominion of the Duke of Anjou. Mutual confidence between the two nations, had not only become extinct, but enmity and rancour subsisted in their place. The Prince of Parma, relieved by so unexpected an interposition of fortune, from his pecuniary difficulties, as well as from the necessity of taking the field against superior forces; profited of the event, to open a negotiation with the revolted cities, and offered them in the name of Philip, their antient sovereign, an amnesty for every offence, together with the most favourable conditions. These proposals operating on minds inflamed by re-

[t] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 40—44.

cent

cent injury, and implacable against their late allies the French, were eventually productive of no inconsiderable effect.[w]

CHAP. IV.

1583. Efforts made to effect a reconciliation.

Every effort was notwithstanding exerted to close the breach, and thereby prevent the fatal consequences of a final rupture between the two parties. Henry the Third himself, alarmed at the effects which such an event might occasion, by the contumely and degradation in which it involved the name and nation of France, sent embassadors to mediate an accommodation. The Prince of Orange, although included personally in the attempt of the Duke of Anjou, which was levelled as much against him, as against the city of Antwerp; yet displayed equal magnanimity and wisdom, in the advice given by him to the States of Flanders. In a beautiful and masterly address, he enumerated the dangers annexed to every other mode of conduct; the impossibility of submitting anew to Philip the Second; the inability of the Flemings to maintain a contest with so powerful a monarch, unless assisted by foreign states; and the prodigious advantages derived from the co-operation and support of a French prince, presumptive heir to the crown of that kingdom. These weighty considerations, when added to the danger of the Duke's delivering up to the Spaniards, the places of which he was in possession, if he should be driven to despair, produced at length a treaty; but, could not oblite-

[w] Strada, vol. iii. p. 426—433. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 43 and 44.

CHAP. IV.

rate the recollection of so perfidious a breach of honour and humanity. It was stipulated that he should repair immediately to Dunkirk, there to await a final reconciliation; and that Dendermonde, as well as Dixmude, should be surrendered to the States: who on their parts, engaged to restore his baggage, and all the prisoners taken at Antwerp, without ransom. A mutual oblivion of every past event, formed the concluding article of the accommodation. [x]

1583. and April. Treaty of oblivion concluded.

Resentment of the Flemings.

The terms were executed on the part of the Duke, without delay; but the States manifested in all their movements, a sentiment of insurmountable aversion towards the French. They even permitted it to operate to the prejudice and ruin of their own affairs; which, no longer supported by any confidence in their former allies, became daily more perplexed and embarrassed. Encouraged by such proofs of disunion, the Prince of Parma recommenced his military operations, and acquired the most decisive advantages: while Biron, who commanded the troops of France, was impeded or checked in every attempt. No cordial forgiveness took place; nor could any assurances of contrition and sorrow on the part of the Duke of Anjou, effect a reunion with his offended subjects. That ill-advised prince, dejected in mind, fallen from his recent elevation, abandoned in a great measure by his brother, and become an

Return of the Duke of Anjou into France. 28th June.

[x] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 45—54. Busbeq. de Bong. letters 15 and 16.

object

object of derision to the Spaniards; after languishing near two months at Dunkirk, embarked for France. The city was immediately invested by the enemy, and surrendered in a few days. Biron, who might have compelled them to raise the siege, was not permitted to march to its rescue, from the jealousy and distrust entertained of him by the Flemings. The Prince of Parma rapidly made himself master of Dixmude and Nieuport; menaced Ostend, besieged Ipres, and already approached Antwerp itself. Ghent, the largest city of the Netherlands, and whose inhabitants had been the most eager to invoke the assistance of the French; with the inconstancy always characteristic of their conduct in every period of time, were the first to betray a disposition to return to the obedience of Spain.

CHAP IV. 1583.

Rapid progress of the Prince of Parma.

The people of Antwerp, irritated personally against the Duke of Anjou, rose tumultuously on the slightest pretences, and could scarcely be restrained from taking vengeance on those of his countrymen, who remained in Flanders. With a view to augment their discontent, the Spanish general quartered his troops in their immediate vicinity, which had long been exempt from military ravage and contribution. The popularity of the Prince of Orange himself, could not be maintained against the tide of obloquy and ill fortune; nor was he exempt from the severest animadversions, on account of his attachment to the French alliance. Warned by the symptoms of so serious a

CHAP. IV.

change in the opinions of the people, he determined to withdraw into the province of Zealand; a resolution which he speedily executed. After his departure, he continued nevertheless his exhortations to the Flemings to retain Biron, who still commanded a considerable body of troops; and he dispatched messengers to the principal cities of Flanders and Brabant, to enforce its expediency. But, all exertions proved fruitless, to vanquish the resentment felt for injuries so deep and recent: a decree was issued on the part of the States, enjoining the French to quit the Low Countries; and Biron, in compliance with it, embarking his forces, joined the Duke of Anjou soon afterwards in the neighbourhood of Cambray, where he even attempted to re-assemble an army. Such was the unfortunate termination of an enterprize, which had for its object nothing less than the transfer of the ten provinces of the Netherlands, with all their ports and harbours, to a prince of France; and which, if it had been conducted by a skilful and able hand, might have materially affected and changed the face of Europe. The precipitation and treachery of the sovereign whom the Flemings had elected, overturned at once the foundations of his future grandeur; and by a natural transition, operated powerfully in facilitating the final return of the Low Countries, to the obedience of Philip the Second. [y]

1583. Retreat of the Prince of Orange into Zealand. July.

August.

Evacuation of the Low Countries, by the French.

[y] Strada, vol. iii. p. 435—452. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 260—262. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 55—61. Busbeq. Letters 17—24. passim. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 475—477.

While

CHAP. IV.

1583.

While these sinister events took place in Flanders, the seeds of civil dissention, under the misguided and pusillanimous management of the King, were attaining rapidly to maturity in France. The exertions which he had made in order to extricate his brother, and to re-establish the harmony that had subsisted between him and the Flemings previous to the attempt upon Antwerp, had neither been produced by the emotions of fraternal affection, nor by sentiments of personal esteem. On the contrary, Henry, only anxious to prolong his indolent and dissipated mode of life, regarded the projects of the Duke of Anjou as subversive of his own repose, to which he sacrificed every consideration of public honour, or of national utility. Instead of correcting and amending the errors which had rendered him justly an object of aversion, or of contempt, to his people; all the vices of his character acquired force as he advanced in age. Taxes, although multiplied and augmented beyond all former precedent, yet far from enriching the royal treasury, left him needy, and incapable of opposing the designs of his enemies. The factions of his court and kingdom, which became annually more formidable, appeared to hasten to some great crisis. Terrified at the prospect, and conscious that he could find no refuge in the attachment or veneration of his subjects, he tried to find an asylum in the majesty of the throne itself. He encreased his guards; no longer appeared in public, as he had been hitherto

Fermentation in France.

Incapacity and misconduct of Henry.

His feeble precautions and measures.

CHAP. IV. 1583.

accustomed, without attendants; and attempted, if he could not conciliate affection, to inspire fear in the minds of all those who approached his person. Wearied or disgusted at the fetters imposed on his freedom by these precautions, he soon however desisted from them, and plunged anew into amusements or dissipation. Yet anxious to acquire, or to retain some place in the love of the lower orders of the nation, he affected amidst all his excesses, an exterior of devotion; and even gave a sanction by his example, to the most absurd practices of superstition.

Institution of the Confraternities of Penitents.

The confraternities of Penitents, which in the beginning of his reign he had witnessed at Avignon; but which, the remonstrances of the magistrates of Paris, and of the most respectable members of the parliament, had hitherto prevented from finding an entrance into the metropolis, were there introduced and established. These pious mummeries, subversive of real piety, injurious to moral observances, and destructive of all obedience to the laws, became the perpetual occupation and entertainment of the inhabitants of the capital. The members composing them, were by the King's express authority, formed into a regular body or corporation; and statutes, published with solemnity, were framed for their regulation. Henry in person, accompanied by the Papal nuntio, the princes of the blood, and the principal courtiers, assisted at the processions. Even the Chancellor of France, the Keeper of the Seals, and

Processions.

March.

the first civil magistrates, forgetful of the dignity of their functions, did not hesitate to mix in the cavalcade, covered with sacks, their faces concealed, and in the most inclement weather. Many disorders as well as irregularities, equally contrary to religion and to decency, found shelter under so convenient a disguise; and the people, instead of being edified or amended by such grotesque spectacles, growing more licentious, manifested their contempt of all internal order. Far from attaining the object for which he had set on foot the confraternities, Henry became only more universally despised by his subjects. The contrast of debauchery and excess, which he had exhibited in the company of his minions, only a few days preceding, and before the view of the same populace, served to expose him to the severest censure. Hypocrisy was added by his enemies, to the list of all his other vices; and even those who attributed to devout sentiments or impressions, his attendance on the processions of the Flagellants, did not less severely reprobate such conduct in a king, as unbecoming his dignity and situation. The clergy themselves, who might, from obvious motives, have been disposed to see his actions through a favourable medium, yet declaimed against his character; while the pulpits of Paris already resounded with the language of insolence and sedition.[x]

CHAP. IV. 1583.

Contempt of the royal dignity and authority.

[x] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 66—69. L'Etoile, Jour. d'Henry III. p. 157 and 158. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 262 and 263.

CHAP. IV.

1583.

Symptoms of popular commotion.

Numerous symptoms of an approaching and serious insurrection began to appear; though such was the almost unexampled indolence and infatuation of the King, that they made little impression on his mind, and produced no change in his conduct. Publications, derogatory to the title of his family to reign over the French, as derived from Hugh Capet, head of the Capetian line; and calculated to impress the people with an opinion of the greater validity of the pretensions of the ducal house of Lorrain to the crown of France, as being descended from Charlemagne, founder of the Carlovingian dynasty; were industriously circulated throughout the kingdom. The injudicious and mistaken clemency of Henry, who did not punish the authors of such inflammatory or treasonable productions, with the severity that they merited, encreased the evil. He even degraded himself so far, as to authorize a public refutation of the attack made on his right to the crown of France; and by so undignified a mode of proceeding, in appealing to the press, when he should have inflicted exemplary punishment, he necessarily inspired his enemies with greater audacity.[a]

Power and ascendancy of the minions.

The effect of so many political or moral causes combining to shake his power, was heightened by the unlimited ascendancy obtained over him by his favourites. It seemed to partake of insanity, and was neither moderated by consi-

[a] L'Etole, p. 162 and 163. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 70—72.

CHAP. IV. 1583.

derations of propriety, nor even always of practicability. He appeared principally anxious to divide his bounty between Joyeuse and Epernon, with so equal a hand, that no degree of jealousy or rivality might interrupt their felicity, and diminish their mutual friendship. Joyeuse having conceived the design of acquiring the important and extensive government of Languedoc, then possessed by the Duke de Montmorenci; but, unable to procure that Nobleman's renunciation or dismission; ventured on a singular expedient, in order to attain his object. Repairing in person to the court of Rome, he endeavoured to induce Gregory the Thirteenth to issue an excommunication against the Marshal, as a protector and abettor of the Hugonots. His request was however rejected by the pontiff, who penetrated the motives of Joyeuse's visit, and well knew how to appreciate the conduct of Montmorenci, in forming connections with the Protestants. In order to compensate for the mortification attending the refusal, Henry, after his return, conferred on him the government of Normandy; which province, from its magnitude and political consequence, had usually been divided into four separate departments, respectively entrusted to lieutenants. Epernon received from the King, the government of Boulogne, together with that of Metz; the former place constituting one of the keys of France on the side of England, as the latter city covered the eastern frontiers

Journey of the Duke of Joyeuse to Rome.

CHAP. IV. 1583.

frontiers towards Germany and Lorrain.[b] By this act, Henry might be said to have entrusted the safety and almost the destiny of his kingdom, to two young and inexperienced favourites, raised from obscurity to the summit of power and greatness, by his capricious predilection.

Ineffectual attempts to raise supplies.

Every measure adopted by the King, in order to recover his popularity, or to impress the nation with a favourable opinion of his character and intentions, only served to render apparent his want of judgment, and proved completely ineffectual for the purpose. Under the plausible pretence of hearing, and redressing the grievances of the people; but in fact, with a view to derive supplies from their loyalty or generosity, he dispatched commissioners into many of the provinces, selected from among the nobility and clergy. They exposed the wants of the crown, magnified and extolled the affection of Henry for his subjects, but concluded with demanding contributions: their mission proved equally fruitless, and injurious to their master. An assembly, composed of delegates, which was designed to point out remedies for the various evils experienced in the courts of justice, and in the administration of the finances, was not attended with more beneficial consequences. Propositions for abolishing venality in judicial employments, and for the

[b] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 264 and 265. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 74—80.

diminution

diminution of taxes, were likewise offered; but no alteration was effected in either of these important departments of state.[c]

1583.

Second expedition to the Azores.

Anthony, the titular and unfortunate King of Portugal, continued meanwhile earnestly to solicit at Paris, another enterprize for the reduction of the Azores, and his subsequent re-establishment on the throne from which he had been expelled. Henry, in compliance with the exhortations of his mother Catherine, and of the Duke of Joyeuse, rather than from any inclination to undertake so hazardous an attempt, at length permitted a squadron to be equipped at Dieppe. It consisted of only a few ships, on board of which were embarked six hundred troops. Having reached the island of Terceira, where Emanuel de Sylva still remained in the interests of the exiled King; and being joined by the survivors of Strozzi's army, added to a number of Portugueze and natives, they prepared for their defence. Philip, anxious to crush a rebellion from which his new conquest might receive a fatal blow, dispatched the Marquis of Santa Croix a second time, at the head of sixty galeasses, gallies, and vessels of various dimensions. Near twelve thousand Spanish, Italian, and German soldiers, accompanied him, who were furnished with every means to facilitate the entire accomplishment of the expedition. The event corresponded to the preparations. Disunion and jealousy im-

Fleet of Spain sent to those islands.

[c] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 268—270. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 81 and 82.

peded

CHAP. IV.

peded the operations of the French and Portugueze. Sylva having separated from his allies, and even offered to betray them, in order to obtain his own pardon, no possibility remained of contending against so unequal a force. De Chatte, an officer of approved courage and fidelity, who commanded the troops of France, finding his situation desperate, capitulated on honourable terms; and Santa Croix, content with atchieving the great object of the war, did not violate the conditions. Sylva, delivered up by his own adherents, suffered the punishment of rebellion; and Philip exercised the severest vengeance on the inhabitants of Terceira, who had so long defied his power, and endangered his tranquillity. No further attempt was made in any part of the Portugueze dominions, to shake off the yoke of Spain: and the unsuccessful issue of the French armament, only tended to decry the administration, by which it had been fitted out and devoted to almost certain destruction.[d]

1583.

August.

Complete reduction of the rebels.

1584. Prosperous condition of the Spanish affairs in Flanders.

While Philip thus triumphed on the Atlantic, and was preparing in the ports of Spain, the Armada intended for the conquest of England, his arms were advancing rapidly in Flanders. The conspiracy of the Duke of Anjou against the liberties of Antwerp, may be regarded as an era from which the affairs of the Netherlands constantly declined. Every endeavour to retard, or to avert its consequences,

[d] La Clede, vol. ii. p. 149—155. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 94—104.

was

was rendered ineffectual by the resentment of the Flemings, and the promptitude of the Prince of Parma. That celebrated commander improved his advantages, with vigour and celerity. Having invested Ipres, and compelled the place to capitulate, he soon afterwards became master of Bruges, which submitted on favourable conditions. Ghent, shaken by intestine divisions, already prepared to follow the example; and the navigation of the river Schelde, which was greatly impeded, rendered more than doubtful, the ultimate preservation of Antwerp.[e]

CHAP. IV.

1584.

12th April.

26th May.

Under these distressful circumstances, the States of Flanders yielding to the wise counsels of the Prince of Orange, dispatched deputies to wait on the Duke of Anjou, with assurances of their disposition to ratify a new treaty, and to submit again to his orders. But, that prince was no longer in a situation to listen to the dictates of glory, or of ambition. From the period of his quitting the Low Countries, a sense of his misconduct, and remorse for its effects, had constantly pursued him. Oppressed with shame, and uncertain of his future operations, he avoided society, and abandoned himself to dejection. After passing some months in retirement, he suddenly and unexpectedly appeared again at court, with only a few attendants. A reconciliation was mediated between him and his brother, by Catherine of Medicis; and the Duke returning to the castle of Cha-

Negotiations opened by the Flemings, with the Duke of Anjou.

11th February.

[e] Strada, vol. iii. p. 465—476. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 173—181.

teau

CHAP. IV.

1543.

teau Thierry on the river Marne, near Soissons, where he frequently resided, was soon afterwards attacked by symptoms of a very alarming nature. A violent effusion of blood from all the passages of his body, caused by the effects of a cough, reduced him to so languid a state, that he expired after a few weeks, in the prime of life. The nature and circumstances of his distemper, though probably natural, gave rise to suspicions of poison, in an age when that crime was familiar. His death, which became the signal of civil war, liberated the partizans of "the League" from all further disguise, or necessity of observing measures with the crown.

1st May.

His death. 10th June.

His character.

Notwithstanding the defects and weaknesses of Francis's character, he was not destitute of generous qualities; and during his last illness, he manifested a deep concern for the fate of those individuals, who having contributed to enable him to undertake the enterprize of Flanders, were by his decease reduced to poverty and distress. By his will, which was addressed to the King, he earnestly, though vainly besought of Henry, to discharge his immense pecuniary obligations. Of all his acquisitions in the Low Countries, only the city of Cambray remained; which place he bequeathed to his brother, as a bulwark to protect Picardy and Champagne against the Spanish power. But Henry, fearful of giving Philip a pretext for war, if he openly took Cambray under his protection, permitted his mother to retain it, as if it had devolved to her by inheritance. From similar motives, the council

cil of state did not venture to designate the deceased prince, by the titles of Duke of Brabant, and Count of Flanders, at the solemnity of his funeral obsequies[f]. When we reflect that Henry the Third, after nine years of marriage, remained destitute and nearly hopeless of issue; and when we further recollect that Francis, Duke of Anjou, was the last prince of the line of Valois, it must excite some surprize that his mother and brother should have allowed him to continue in a state of celibacy; thus reflectively opening the succession, and devolving the crown of France on the branch of Bourbon. Henry, King of Navarre, was besides odious to Catherine of Medicis; and though he stood in the relation of her son-in-law, yet had no children by his queen, whose dissolute conduct rendered her an object of opprobrium and contempt. If to these circumstances we add the religion of the King of Navarre, which of itself incapacitated and disqualified him for reigning over the French, in case of the decease of Henry the Third; we can scarcely explain the conduct of Catherine, except by supposing that she looked forward to the house of Lorrain, and in a special degree to the Duke of Guise, as the future sovereigns of France. 1584.

Assassination of the Prince of Orange.

The Duke of Anjou's death was speedily followed by a blow still more alarming to the in-

[f] L'Etoile, Jour. p. 173 and 177—179. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 274 and 275. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 181—184. Busbeq. Letters 33, 34, 35. 37, 38, and 39. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 422 and 423.

dependance

CHAP. IV. 1584. dependance of the Flemings. The crime which Jaureguy had not been able to accomplish, was perpetrated by another assassin; and Philip at length reaped the detestable fruits of his proscription of the Prince of Orange. That eminent and illustrious person, who had escaped the poinards of so many enemies, and the greater part of whose life had been passed in opposing the tyranny of Spain, fell by the hand of a desperate fanatic. He was shot with three balls, discharged from a pistol, as he rose from table, in the city of Delft, which place constituted his most frequent residence. Balthazar Gerard, a subject of the King of Spain, and an emissary of the Prince of Parma, was the murderer; and with the spirit of an enthusiast, in the midst of the torments inflicted on him, he gloried in his crime. The prince survived the wound only a few moments, expiring amid the tears and lamentations of his family, who were spectators of so tragical a scene.

10th July.

Character of that prince.

The desolation occasioned by his loss, throughout the provinces of Holland and Zealand, bore a proportion to the magnitude of the calamity. The people, who already anticipated anew their subjection to the Spanish yoke, dreaded their own slavery, as inseparably connected with the death of their protector. In prudence, fortitude, moderation, firmness, and all the talents requisite to form the head of a vast and powerful combination, he exceeded any of his contemporaries. His military capacity was far inferior to that of his antagonist, the Prince of Parma;

Parma; but the universality of his genius, and the depth of his resources, enabled him to sustain, and to surmount, all the efforts of the Spanish monarchy. Invincible under adverse fortune, he rose more formidable from his defeats; and to his unremitted exertions, the republic of Holland was indebted for its freedom, and its existence. William the First seems in all the constituent points of his character, and even in his defects, to have been the prototype and model of his descendant, William the Third, King of Great Britain. So singularly close is the moral resemblance between them, as not to be overlooked by the most superficial or careless observer. It might be said that the one prince was revived and reanimated in the other, at the distance of more than a century. Each in his turn defended, extricated, and saved the country entrusted to his care. They were alike unfortunate in the field, and overmatched in ability by the generals opposed to them. The Duke of Alva, and Alexander Farnese were not more superior to William the First, than the great Condé and Luxembourg exceeded William the Third, in the science of tactics, and the art of war. Both, nevertheless, ultimately triumphed by perseverance, energy of mind, and insurmountable tenacity of temper. Neither of them were amiable in their private and domestic capacity, though illustrious as statesmen and as sovereigns. The gratitude of the people whom he had saved from tyranny, was about to confer on the former prince, the title

CHAP. IV. 1584.

Gratitude of the Dutch for his services.

CHAP. IV.

1584.

and prerogatives of the antient *Counts of Holland*, when his death took place; and as the best proof of their veneration for his services, they elected his son Maurice, although he had scarcely passed the limits of childhood, governor of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht; to which elevation they added the dignity of high-admiral. By an instance of felicity, rare in the history of mankind, he inherited almost all the great endowments of his father; excelled him in talents for war; and during the course of a life distinguished by brilliant atchievements, he beheld that liberty confirmed and cemented, to which William, Prince of Orange, had given birth. [s]

[s] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 184—189. Strada, vol. iii. p. 480—487. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 276.

CHAP. V.

State of France, at the time of the Duke of Anjou's death. — Ineffectual attempt of Henry to induce the King of Navarre to renounce his religion. — Preparations of Henry, Duke of Guise, for taking up arms. — Support given by Catherine of Medicis, to his ambitious projects. — Irresolution of Henry. — Treaty of Joinville. — Sovereignty of the Low Countries, offered to the King of France. — Rejected by him. — First enterprizes of "the League." — Timidity of the King. — Treaty of Nemours. — War declared against the Protestants. — Manifesto of the King of Navarre. — Junction of the Protestants with Montmorenci. — Accession of Pope Sixtus the Fifth. — He excommunicates the King of Navarre. — Reply of that prince. — Commencement and progress of hostilities. — Unsuccessful attempt of the Prince of Condé on Angers. — Affairs of the Low Countries. — Surrender of Antwerp. — Queen of England accepts the protection of the Dutch.

CHAP. V.

1584. Condition of France, at this period.

BEFORE we enter upon that portion of the reign of Henry the Third, at which the wars of "the League" may be properly said to commence, it is indispensable to take a general view of the state of the court, the capital, and the kingdom of France. Many causes had hitherto conduced to retard, and to delay the operations of the confederacy begun in 1576 at Peronne; the undoubted, though concealed object of which was, if not the de-

CHAP. V. 1584.

struction of the monarchy, at least the subversion of the reigning dynasty. Henry had in some measure disarmed it, at an early period of its existence, by adopting and declaring himself its chief. A measure by which he thus constituted himself the head of a faction, however unbecoming the dignity of the throne, and the character of the common protector of every denomination of his subjects; yet had enabled him to guide and controul a machine, too powerful to be destroyed by open force. The Hugonots, feeble, disunited, and excluded from dignities or employments, excited little apprehension; while their leader, the King of Navarre, banished to a distant province, deprived of authority, even in his own government of Guienne, and destitute of any prospect of succeeding to the crown, constituted neither an object of alarm to his enemies, nor of attention to the nobility and people. Almost all the youth of France, and the most turbulent or discontented spirits of every description, had found occupation, beyond the limits of the kingdom, during the expeditions undertaken by the Duke of Anjou for the acquisition of the Netherlands. Even in the event of Henry's death without male issue, the Catholic religion could not by possibility be endangered, while his brother, whose adherence to the faith of his ancestors was unimpeached, and who was still in the flower of his age, survived to ascend the throne.

But

CHAP. V.

1584.

But all these circumstances, so important to the preservation of general tranquillity, became completely overturned by the decease of the Duke of Anjou. No barrier was any longer opposed to the eventual succession of the King of Navarre, which the nation regarded as certain on the demise of Henry, from his supposed inaptitude for the purposes of marriage. That prince, without waiting till his brother's eyes were closed, and during the state of extenuation which preceded his death at Chateau Thierry, had already dispatched the Duke of Epernon on a mission into Gascony. He was authorized to offer the King of Navarre the most advantageous conditions, if he would renounce his adherence to the Protestant religion, and repair to court without delay. A public declaration of his right to succeed to the crown, in case of Henry's failure of issue male; accompanied with every mark of regard and distinction on the part of the sovereign, were the inducements proposed in order to obtain his acquiescence. [a]

Consequences of the Duke of Anjou's death.

May. Embassy of Epernon.

No situation could be more embarrassing than the position of the King of Navarre. Whether he accepted, or rejected the proposals made him, he beheld himself surrounded by difficulties of no common magnitude. To abandon at once his religion, and those faithful followers who had never forsaken him under

Situation of the King of Navarre.

[a] Busbeq. Letters 37, 38, 39, and 40. L'Etoile, p. 176. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 198 and 199.

CHAP. V. 1584.

every reverse of fortune; to return to a capital and a palace stained with the blood of his friends, and in which he had, himself, been so long detained a prisoner; to commit his life, his honour, and his interests, to the mercy of a prince, whose weakness, flexibility, and facility, he well knew; or to the machinations of a perfidious Italian woman, his personal enemy, such as Catherine of Medicis; — all these were alarming reflexions. On the other hand, the crown of France appeared to solicit his acceptance, and to justify, if not to demand every sacrifice, even of conscience, for its attainment. His renunciation of the Hugonot faith and worship, could alone qualify him to wear it with safety, whenever it might devolve upon him; and would instantly remove the scruples of those zealous Catholics, who might otherwise dispute his title. Even the Guises and their partizans must find themselves unable to oppose with effect his right of consanguinity, when no longer weakened or annulled by the stain of heresy; and the public felicity, paramount to every other consideration, seemed to render his apostacy not only venial, but in some measure meritorious. If this important question of state had been only decided on grounds of policy and expediency, or if it could have been argued on its own proper merits, it is probable that the latter alternative would have predominated. But, in an age when theological controversy heated the minds of men, when mutual injuries

He rejects the offers of Henry.

juries had rendered them tenacious of their opinions, and when scarcely twelve years had elapsed since the massacre of Paris; arguments drawn from Scripture, were opposed to motives of state necessity. The King of Navarre, after long hesitation and mature deliberation, rejected therefore the proposition brought by Epernon: he qualified at the same time his refusal, by protestations of his personal duty and allegiance to Henry; by assurances of his gratitude for the mark of royal favour extended to him; and by the offer of all the forces of his party, to sustain the crown against their common enemies. [b]

CHAP. V. 1584. July.

Conduct of the chiefs of the League.

Although the unsuccessful result of Epernon's embassy, was immediately rendered public by the Protestants themselves, yet it afforded a specious pretext to the adherents of "the League," for accusing Henry of intentions the most hostile to the preservation and maintenance of the antient religion. They asserted, that far from exhorting the King of Navarre to abjure his errors, Epernon had on the contrary been only dispatched, in order to conclude a treaty with him, which had for its object, the extermination of all the adherents of the Catholic faith. Under this fictitious pretence, they even proceeded to adopt measures, little removed from an avowed insurrection. Troops were silently collected in dif-

[b] Vie du Duc d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 85—91. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 77—175. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 198—209. Davila, p. 520—523.

CHAP. V

1584.

ferent provinces: chiefs were named and appointed, who on a signal given, received orders to repair to their destination; and every movement of the confederates proved a rebellion to be imminent as well as inevitable [c]. The feeble and pusillanimous conduct of the King, at a moment which demanded the most vigorous and decisive counsels, gave courage to his enemies, while it exposed the throne to insult and contempt. Far from meeting a danger that he could no longer disguise or avoid, with becoming firmness; he scarcely ventured to express his sense of its existence, or his resentment at its approach. A proclamation, strictly forbidding all confederations or levies, on pain of treason, which he issued at this period, formed a very insufficient barrier against a formidable faction, armed with the sanction of religion, secretly supported by foreign powers, and conducted under leaders of equal intrepidity and talents.

Pusillanimity of the King.

December.

Henry, Duke of Guise, the real chief of "the League," and who exclusively directed all its motions, constituted the supreme object of popular idolatry. Concealing his personal ambition, under the mask of zeal for the Catholic faith; retaining in his own bosom the secret of his ultimate views, which always remained doubtful; and only divulging, even to his nearest connexions, a portion of his intentions; rapid in his determinations, as well as

Qualities, and character of the Duke of Guise.

[c] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 200 and 201. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 280.

in

in their execution; and conducted by the circumstances which he had himself produced, to the completion of his political plans; he seemed to be formed for the scene and period in which he acted so distinguished a part. The superiority of his talents, and the energy of his character, even more than the priority of birth, had given him an unbounded ascendant over his brothers, Louis, and Charles. The first of these two princes, already raised to the dignity of a Cardinal, endowed with an aspiring disposition, impetuous, haughty, and violent, continually propelled the Duke to adopt the most daring and desperate counsels. On the contrary, Charles, Duke of Mayenne, although distinguished by equal personal courage, yet more cautious, moderate, and phlegmatic in his temper, disapproved the rash projects of the head of his family; manifested a degree of reluctance to commit to hazard their present greatness, attained under five successive Kings of France; and rather yielded to, than actively participated in the resolution, to commence a civil war.[d]

CHAP. V. 1584.

Duke of Mayenne.

Plausible as the pretences appeared, on which the Duke of Guise justified his opposition to the crown, they might nevertheless have proved insufficient to enable him to escape the imputation and the penalties of rebellion, or to seduce the affections and allegiance of the people from their sovereign, without other assistance.

The Cardinal of Bourbon joins the League.

[d] Davila, p. 502—505.

It

CHAP. V.

1584.

It became indispensable to cover and conceal his ultimate plans of ambition, under the shelter of a prince of the royal blood; and the Cardinal of Bourbon, younger brother of Anthony, King of Navarre, who fell at the siege of Rouen, early in the course of the civil wars, was the only individual of that high rank, fitted to his purpose. This weak and superstitious prelate, deluded by the prospect of succeeding to the crown, in preference to his nephew, Henry, King of Navarre; and surrounded by emissaries, who exaggerated the danger to which the Catholic religion would be exposed, in the event of a Hugonot ascending the throne; resigned himself implicitly to their suggestions. Incapable of discerning the snare, and flattered by the homage paid to his supposed titles, he prepared to act a principal part in the ruin and subversion of his country. [c]

Factions, and weakness of the court.

Nor did the Guises derive less support at this critical juncture, from the internal dissentions, treachery, and interested views, by which the cabinet of Henry was swayed and actuated in all its deliberations. Catherine of Medicis, who had so long presided in it, and whose influence or authority had been felt throughout France, during near twenty successive years, was indeed no longer in possession of her former power. The minions of her son, who had engrossed the royal favour, and had contrived to alienate the King from

The Queen-dowager.

[c] Davila, p. 510—512. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 265 and 266.

his

his brother; succeeded likewise in diminishing, if not in annihilating, the Queen-dowager's ascendancy. She saw no probable means of resuming it, except by rendering her interference in state affairs, necessary: and as her penetration enabled her clearly to perceive, that in the actual situation of the Netherlands, Henry must finally chuse between a war with the King of Spain, or a contest with his own subjects; she, listening only to the dictates of unprincipled ambition, desired to involve him in the latter struggle, where her mediation would be perpetually requisite [f].

CHAP. V. 1584.

Other motives, rather personal than political, concurred in impelling Catherine to favour the family of Lorrain. Of her four sons, three were already dead in the prime of youth; and no rational hope of legitimate issue to inherit the crown remained, though Henry was still in the vigour of his age. Her detestation of the King of Navarre, was inveterate and implacable; nor did she hesitate frequently to declare, that she regarded his right of consanguinity as chimerical, or at least as questionable and problematical [g]. His marriage with Margaret, her daughter, solemnized at the time of the massacre of Paris, had neither proved fruitful, nor been productive of any conciliation between the two branches of Valois and of Bourbon. The irregularities and libertinism of the Queen of Navarre, unrestrained by decency, were so notorious, as even to excite the indignation

Views and projects of Catherine.

Libertinism of the Queen of Navarre.

[f] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 252.

[g] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 277.

of

CHAP. V.

1584.

of Henry the Third himself, though little attentive in his own conduct, to the rigid observance of the laws of decorum or morality. That prince, incensed against his sister for having, as he believed, authorized the assassination of one of his messengers, charged with dispatches of a very secret nature, addressed to the Duke of Joyeuse at Rome; had ordered her to leave the court of Paris, and to return to her husband in Gascony. Not content with banishing her from his capital and presence, he had further caused her to be treated with every possible indignity, and had publickly upbraided her with her infamy and debauchery. Neglected and despised by the King of Navarre, to whom she repaired, Margaret soon afterwards quitted him; and after retiring to the city of Agen on the river Garonne, where she resided during a short time, she ultimately took refuge among the mountains of the province of Auvergne, in the most central and inaccessible portion of France.[h]

Plan of Catherine, for altering the succession of the crown.

Under these circumstances, the Queen-mother, regardless of the long established Salic law, which excluded females from ascending the throne, or devolving the sceptre on their descendants; turned her views towards the issue of her daughter Claudia, married to the reigning Duke of Lorrain. She even attempted to induce the King, whose aversion to the Hugonots rendered him susceptible of every impression to

[h] Vie de Marguerite de Valois, p. 341—348.

their

their disadvantage, to adopt measures for devolving the crown on the eldest son of his sister, the Duchess of Lorrain. The Duke of Guise, however disinclined he might be to become subservient to the greatness of another prince, notwithstanding the connexions arising from proximity of blood which subsisted between them; yet flattered the Queen-dowager with his aid, and entire acquiescence in her project. In return, Catherine dissembled all his treasonable practices; deceived the King by plausible excuses for his daring conduct; extenuated his faults, and betrayed her son in the dearest interests of his throne and kingdom[1]. That unfortunate monarch found no resources in his own character, against the perfidy of his ministers; who, desirous of conciliating the favour of Catherine, or corrupted by Spanish gold, which Philip the Second transmitted, were equally disposed to conceal, and even to advance, the projects of "the League." His natural and habitual irresolution was still more encreased, by the opposite opinions of his two principal favourites. Joyeuse, who by his marriage with a princess of Vaudemont, had contracted an alliance with the family of Guise, exhorted his master to temporize; and even persuaded him to unite with the princes of that house, for the extermination of the Protestants. But Epernon, by birth a Gascon, long personally attached to the King of Navarre, and one

CHAP. V. 1584.

Irresolution of the King.

Opposite advice of his two favourites.

[1] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 252 and 253.

of

CHAP. V. 1584.

of those individuals who accompanied him in his flight from the court, at the commencement of Henry's reign; urged him on the contrary to have recourse to the friendship and assistance of a prince, who, though by profession a Hugonot, was nevertheless his rightful heir, and only legitimate successor in the throne of France. Uncertain of the course that he should follow, incapable of making a vigorous effort for his extrication, and ever disposed to consult his present ease, at the expence of his future glory or safety; Henry allowed the period for action to elapse, in fruitless deliberations.[k]

Treaty between the League, and the King of Spain.

While the King, by a timidity so pernicious, exposed his crown to the most imminent hazard; the chiefs of "the League," conducted by very different counsels, and conscious that they had already advanced too far to retreat with safety, signed their treaty with Philip the Second. It was solemnly ratified and exchanged at the castle of Joinville in Champagne, belonging to the Duke of Guise. He himself in person, together with the Duke of Mayenne, and a procurator who represented the Cardinal of Bourbon, appeared in the names and on behalf of the Catholics of France. Taxis, deputed by the King of Spain for the purpose, and fully authorized to conclude the negotiation, stipulated on the part of his sovereign. By the articles, Philip took under

31st December.

Articles of it.

[k] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 253.

his protection, and entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the contracting princes, for the maintenance and preservation of the Catholic religion in France, and throughout the Low Countries. In case of the demise of Henry the Third, the Cardinal of Bourbon was declared to be the rightful heir to the crown; and a perpetual exclusion was specified of all heretics from the succession to the throne. The restitution of Cambray to Spain, was inserted; together with the co-operation of the French, in order to effect the reduction of the Flemish insurgents to the obedience of their former master. Philip in return, engaged from the day on which the war should be commenced against the Protestants, to pay to the Catholic princes of the house of Guise, fifty thousand crowns monthly: and by another article, he promised to supply the Duke of Guise with whatever number of men, or sums of money, might be requisite to enable him to carry the treaty into complete execution. For reasons of expediency, it was agreed to keep the transaction secret, till a favourable moment should occur for its disclosure.[1]

CHAP. V. 1584.

At a time that in France, every circumstance thus announced the approach of civil war, the Flemings, divided among themselves, and pressed by the arms of the Prince of Parma, were

1585. Affairs of Flanders.

[1] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 282 and 283. Davila, p. 513 and 514. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 272—275.

reduced

CHAP. V. 1585.

reduced to the greatest extremities. The death of the Duke of Anjou, which took place at a juncture when an obliteration of all past injuries or animosities, was on the point of completion; being followed so soon afterwards by the assassination of the Prince of Orange, plunged them into accumulated distress. Ghent, which had already submitted on severe conditions, was received into the obedience of its antient sovereign. The cities of Mechlin and Brussels, invested by detachments from the army of Spain, and beginning to experience the effects of famine, could not make a long or a successful resistance. The Prince of Parma reserving to himself, as the most arduous and difficult undertaking, the siege of Antwerp; had commenced his operations against the place, by intercepting all supplies or reinforcements which could arrive at it, by means of the Schelde. In order to attain this object, without which, he was conscious, all his efforts must prove fruitless, he undertook completely to block the passage of the river below the city, notwithstanding the breadth and the rapidity of the stream. The work thus commenced, which in magnitude and difficulty might be compared with the most gigantic efforts of antiquity, and seemed to rival the Mole constructed by Alexander when he besieged Tyre, was considerably advanced; and if perfected, the reduction of Antwerp became from that moment almost certain and inevitable. Urged by such alarming considerations, which admitted

Siege of Antwerp.

Difficulty of the enterprize.

mitted of no delay; the states of all those provinces where the Spanish arms had not as yet penetrated, after mature reflection, embraced the expedient of imploring the protection of the King of France. An embassy, composed of persons selected for their talents and eminence, was empowered to offer the sovereignty of all the Low Countries to Henry, on such conditions as might be stipulated for their mutual advantage. The delegates having sailed from the ports of Zealand, landed safely in France; and after remaining some time in the vicinity of Paris, were admitted, notwithstanding the remonstrances and menaces of Mendoza, the Spanish embassador, to an audience of the sovereign. Henry received them graciously, in presence of the Queen-mother, and of his council of state; expressed his deep sense of the flattering proposition made him by the Flemings; gave them hopes of his acquiescence in their request; and signified his wish that they would deliver in a written copy of their offer, in order that he, in concert with his ministers, might deliberate fully on so momentous a subject.[m]

CHAP. V.

1585.

The Flemings implore the protection of Henry.

January.

12th February.

Never did a more weighty and important discussion present itself to a king of France, nor a question which involved in it consequences more deeply affecting his personal glory, and the general interests of his crown.

Reasons for his acceptance of the offer.

[m] Strada, vol. iii. p. 491—495. Busbeq. Letters 40 and 41. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 252—255. Davila, p. 524 and 525. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 284.

CHAP. V.

1585. The inhabitants of the richest and most commercial countries of Europe, sought to be received into the number of his subjects. Those provinces lay contiguous to his own dominions, and a considerable portion of them had antiently been possessed by his predecessors. The tyranny of Philip the Second had driven them into a state of revolt; and greatly as their affairs had declined since the arrival of the Prince of Parma in the Netherlands, they were far from being desperate. That commander, occupied before Antwerp, and engaged in an undertaking which demanded time as well as the greatest exertions, must be driven to a necessity of raising the siege under multiplied disadvantages, if a French army entered Flanders or Brabant. The King of Spain had dissolved all the tyes which connected him with Henry, political or personal; and had violated the peace of Cateau, concluded in 1559 between the two crowns, in the most insulting manner. By his command, or with his approbation, the Marquis of Santa Croix, in equal contradiction to the laws of nations, and to the dictates of humanity, caused the unfortunate prisoners taken at the Azores, to be massacred, or deliberately put to death. Not content with so barbarous a revenge, Philip had conspired against Henry's domestic repose; inflamed his subjects to rebel; aided them with supplies of money; and concluded recently a solemn treaty with their chiefs, the avowed object of which

Provocations given him by Philip the Second.

which compact was to involve the kingdom in an immediate civil war. CHAP. V.

These powerful inducements to awaken a generous resentment, were aided and sustained by motives of policy, and almost of necessity. Only the choice between a civil, or a foreign war, was indeed left to the King; and it seemed impossible to balance on the preference of the two alternatives. Nor was the strength of the Spanish monarchy such, as to deter or intimidate him from attacking it by open force. Philip, declining in years, and having only one sickly male heir, still in childhood, to inherit his vast dominions, was besides involved in numerous embarrassments. Portugal was hardly subjected, while England, governed by Elizabeth, defied his power. The Spanish treasury, unequal to the perpetual demands made on it by the Prince of Parma, could not suffice to equip new fleets, and to pay the numerous armies which would be necessary to combat the French. Even if the resources of the Catholic King were still greater than his adherents described them, it was a more judicious policy to meet him in the field, than to permit the emissaries of Spain to kindle sedition, and to excite rebellion, by the secret distribution of arms and money[n]. There were not wanting about the person of Henry, some incorrupt and honest ministers, who attempted

1585. Debility of the crown and monarchy of Spain.

Henry rejects the proposition of the Flemings.

[n] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 298—312.

CHAP. V. 1585.

to impress upon him a conviction of these facts, and to induce him to embrace a manly and a magnanimous part. That prince himself, who, notwithstanding his vices and indolence of character, possessed penetration, together with a perfect knowledge of the interests of his crown, inclined to accept the offers of the Flemings. But, his aversion to engage in an enterprize of such magnitude and difficulty, together with the opposition which it received from his mother, and the members of the cabinet, finally prevailed on him to reject the proposition. At the audience which he gave to the embassadors of the States, he endeavoured to temper the refusal by every conciliating expression; lamented that the situation of his own affairs, and the troubles occasioned by the adherents of "the League," did not permit him to undertake their defence; assured them that when he had pacified the internal commotions of France, he would extend his attention to the concerns of the Netherlands; and concluded by promising to recommend their cause to the protection of his ally, the Queen of England. °

30th March.

"The League" takes up arms.

The Duke of Guise had not waited for the ultimate decision of Henry upon the proposals of the Flemings, to take up arms. No sooner had intelligence reached the Prince of Parma, that the embassadors deputed by the States, had been admitted to an audience of the King of

° Busbeq. Letters 44, 45, and 46. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 312—315.

France,

France, than he dispatched repeated couriers to Mendoza, the Spanish embassador at Paris. Convinced as Farnese was, that on the final event of the siege of Antwerp, depended the reduction of all the Netherlands to the obedience of Philip; he besought of that minister to urge the partisans of "the League," to the immediate accomplishment of their late engagements with the crown of Spain. Guise himself, sensible that if a foreign war took place, he should not be able to retain under his standard the nobility and officers who were attached to him, did not hesitate to strike the blow. A second edict, published by Henry, in which, after prohibiting all assemblies of troops without his express command, he diminished considerably the ordinary taxes; made no alteration, nor occasioned any delay, in the Duke's resolution. Already, at the first signal given, the forces retained by him, began to collect in Lorrain: while the Duke of Mayenne put himself at the head of a formidable body, in Champagne and Burgundy. Bassompierre, who had raised a number of German cavalry; and Fifer, who had received a similar commission to levy infantry in the cantons of Switzerland, were ordered to advance with all possible celerity. The first attack was made on the city of Verdun, which, after a short defence, surrendered to the Duke of Guise in person. Toul followed the example; but, Metz, one of the most important fortresses of the kingdom, of which Epernon was governor, and in which he had

CHAP. V. 1585.

Edict published by Henry. 29th March.

21st April. First exploits of "the League."

CHAP. V.

placed a numerous garrison, remaining firm in its adherence to the crown, rejected all the offers of the rebels. [p]

1585.

Manifesto of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

Previous to the commencement of hostilities, the Cardinal of Bourbon, acting in concert with the other chiefs of "the League," retired from court to his archiepiscopal diocese of Rouen; from whence being invited by a deputation of the nobility of Picardy, he repaired to the town of Peronne in that province. On his arrival, he published a Manifesto, calculated to impress the nation with sentiments equally favourable to the cause which he had embraced, and injurious to the character of the King. Every popular topic of declamation and complaint was enumerated, and placed in its most conspicuous point of view. The indirect encouragement and support of heresy; the danger of the entire abolition of the ancient faith and worship; the venality of judicial and other offices; the abuses committed by favourites; and the intolerable pecuniary oppressions exercised on the people;—all were stated in exaggerated terms. With a view to remedy these grievances, it was declared that he, as first prince of the blood, together with a number of other persons of every order and condition, had taken up arms; which they were determined never to lay down, till they had obtained complete satisfaction and redress [q]. Meanwhile,

31st March.

[p] Davila, p. 535 and 536. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 275—283.

[q] Davila, p. 528—535. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 284—287. Memoires de Duc de Nevers, folio, Paris 1665, vol. i. p. 641—646.

in

in every part of the kingdom, but peculiarly in the northern and eastern provinces, where the adherents of the house of Guise were numerous, they proceeded to throw off all subjection to the government. The great city of Lyons was secured to them by Mandelot, who having seized and demolished the citadel, declared in their favour. Bourges, Orleans, and Angers, three of the most central and well fortified cities of France, were induced to revolt by the exhortations of their respective governors, who joined "the League." Mezieres, a frontier garrison of Champagne, was taken by the Duke of Guise; while the Duke of Mayenne rendered himself master of Dijon, the capital of Burgundy. Chalons, a place situate on the river Marne, at no considerable distance from Paris, was fixed on for the magazine of arms; and the Cardinal of Bourbon, whose presence and name were so useful in concealing, or in justifying their enterprize, was conducted thither from Peronne, with demonstrations of extraordinary attention and respect. [r]

CHAP. V.

1585.

Insurrections in the provinces.

Notwithstanding so many proofs of disaffection and even of revolt, a prince of energy or firmness might have found in the throne itself, and in the attachment of a considerable part of the nation, resources more than adequate to suppress the rebellion commenced by the partizans of "the League." The specious pre-

Resources of the crown.

[r] Davila, p. 538. Mezarai, vol. ix. p. 285. Busbeq. Letters 48, 49, and 50.

CHAP. V.

1585.

tences, under which the leaders attempted to palliate their insurrection, could only delude the multitude; and made no impression on the wise, or the moderate portion of their countrymen. In several places, their attempts had been completely frustrated, and their followers or accomplices punished as traitors. Marseilles, after having been near three days in the hands of the insurgents, was recovered by the royalists, and secured in the obedience of the crown. At Bourdeaux, Marshal Matignon rendered ineffectual every effort to shake the fidelity, or to gain the possession of that important and commercial city. The proclamation of the King, declaring it treasonable to take up arms, insufficient as such a measure must be esteemed, had nevertheless induced many persons, who had been incautiously induced to join the party, instantly to return home. Others were still wavering and uncertain: the Duke of Nevers, one of their adherents on whom they placed the most implicit reliance, abandoned them from disgust, or from scruples of honour and conscience. Even the Cardinal of Bourbon himself, during a short absence of the Duke of Guise, had been powerfully shaken by the remonstrances made him, and almost induced to return a sense of his duty. It demanded all the eloquence and sophistry of the Duke, to obliterate the impression made on his mind. Gregory the Thirteenth, notwithstanding the importunity and solicitation of the Spanish Cardinals resident

Failure of the plans of "the League."

Obstacles to its success.

at

CHAP. V.

1585.

at Rome, had pertinaciously refused to give any sanction to an enterprize, which, however decorated with the epithets of a holy union for preserving the Catholic religion, savoured of open rebellion. The subsidies of Spain were subject to many delays and contingencies in their transmission: the Swiss and German troops had not yet arrived; and in several provinces, the forces of "the League" had been either dispersed, or cut in pieces.[s]

Weakness of Henry's conduct.

But, such was the inaptitude of Henry for any measures of energy; so insurmountable was his indolence, pusillanimity, and relaxation of mind, that all these circumstances did not rouse him to resistance. Neither indignation for the insulted majesty of the throne, nor a wise consideration of the calamities which firmness and fortitude could alone avert, were of sufficient force to burst the habitual tameness of his character. It was in vain that the King of Navarre, by the intervention of his agents, besought of him not to allow the menaces of the Duke of Guise, to induce him to violate the peace subsisting with the Hugonots, and thereby plunge himself anew into civil war.

He negotiates with "the League."

Yielding to the pernicious suggestions of his mother, and to the interested or perfidious advice of the same ministers who had recently procured the rejection of the offers of the Flemings; he authorized Catherine of Medicis to open a negotiation with the heads of the

[s] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 285—290. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 288—298, and 316—320.

con-

CHAP. V.

confederates. It was begun at Epernay, near Chalons on the river Marne; and after some delays, was ultimately concluded at the city of Nemours. The terms on which the Duke of Guise agreed to lay down his arms, were not less destructive, than they were ignominious to the sovereign by whom they were accepted. Henry not only consented to commence hostilities on the Protestants, and to revoke every concession hitherto made for their protection; but he submitted to the personal degradation of pardoning those by whom he had been insulted and injured, on account of the pretended zeal exhibited by them in defence of the Catholic religion. He even engaged to employ the troops of "the League," actually drawn out against his royal authority, for the extirpation of heresy; and to charge the chiefs of that treasonable association, with the execution of the sentence pronounced against the princes of the blood, the presumptive heirs to the crown of France. In addition to these public articles, he was compelled to subscribe to private conditions which cemented the power of the Guises, and levelled all the remaining barriers opposed to their encroachments. Twelve cities, situated in different provinces of the kingdom, were granted them as places of surety; and as the Hugonots were in possession of eight others, Henry thus beheld his subjects of both religions despoiling him of his dominions, while he nominally continued to occupy the throne. A company of horse

1585. 7th July.

Ignominious articles of the treaty.

Secret conditions.

horse guards was allowed to the Cardinal of Bourbon; to the Dukes of Guise and of Mayenne; to their brother, the Cardinal of Guise, and to their uncles, the Dukes of Aumale and of Elbeuf. All the money belonging to the royal revenue, which they had intercepted and applied to their own purposes, was remitted; and it was further stipulated that the sum of two hundred thousand crowns, due to the German forces raised by the Duke of Guise, should be defrayed by the King.[t]

1585.

Magnanimous behaviour of the King of Navarre.

While Henry thus purchased a precarious and disgraceful suspension of hostilities, at the expence of every prerogative of the crown, and by the sacrifice of his own independance; the King of Navarre displayed a very different character. Conscious that he must become the first victim to "the League," and that his personal ruin would open the way to the destruction or subversion of the monarchy itself; he did not hesitate to anticipate, and to expose, the treasonable projects of his enemies. In a long and spirited Manifesto, addressed to the French nation, he exculpated himself from every injurious charge or imputation, which the malice of his opponents had invented; professed his readiness to submit even his religious opinions, to the decisions of a general council legitimately assembled; retorted the charge of rebellion and treason on those who had without provocation, taken up arms against their

10th June. His manifesto.

[t] Davila, p. 557 and 558. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 292. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 328—331. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 686—689.

CHAP. V. 1585.

rightful prince; and reprobated their ambition, rapacity, and contempt of the laws. He concluded by beseeching the King to permit him to terminate a contest in which so much blood must be shed, by a single combat between himself and the Duke of Guise, in whatever place, either within, or beyond the limits of the kingdom, His Majesty might think proper to appoint.[u]

His letter to Henry.

Finding however, that all his efforts to prevent an accommodation between Henry and the adherents of "the League," proved fruitless; and that the Protestants were on the point of being attacked at the same time, by their united forces; he addressed a letter to the King, in which was strongly depictured all the heroism and magnanimity of an undaunted mind, struggling against oppression. He reminded Henry of his own orders recently issued, enjoining him the King of Navarre, as head of the Protestants, to remain quiet; assuring him of protection; and protesting, that no menaces or artifices of their common adversaries, should ever induce him to infringe the toleration extended to the Hugonots, by the last treaty of peace. He remonstrated with Henry on the cruelty and impolicy of driving his unoffending subjects, to the necessity of defending themselves: he appealed to his own innocence, as the best justification; and professed his reliance on a just and superintending Providence, the avenger

10th July.

[u] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 320—325. Davila, p. 358—362.

of

of crimes, and the shield of those who are oppressed. In conclusion, he declared his determination to perish with arms in his hands; and to oppose to his last breath, the unjust enterprizes of his own enemies, who were those of the crown and kingdom of France. [x]

CHAP. V. 1585.

Union of Montmorenci, with the King of Navarre.

These elevated and generous sentiments were followed by measures equally decisive and efficacious. Although the ostensible preparations and menaces of "the League," armed with the sanction of the royal authority, appeared to be exclusively and solely levelled against the professors of heresy; yet the Duke of Montmorenci, well aware that his own ruin was inseparably connected with that of the King of Navarre, did not hesitate to enter into the strictest union with him and the Prince of Condé, for their mutual preservation. Having met near Lavaur, a town in the province of Upper Languedoc, they framed, and rendered public a declaration, calculated to undeceive the nation on the motives of the war ready to be commenced. In this composition they charged the family of Guise, with having been the authors of all the misfortunes, which, from the reign of Francis the Second, down to the present time, had desolated and depopulated the finest country in Europe. They added, that after calumniating the princes of the blood, and endeavouring to render them odious to the people; the Guises had not scrupled to

10th August. Their joint declaration.

[x] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 326—328.

take

CHAP. V.

take up arms against the King himself, in order by the impressions of terror, to compel an equitable monarch to wage war with his subjects. They protested in their private and public capacities, against such acts of violence and treason; declared their readiness to receive under their safeguard, all Catholics who had not signed "the League;" and finished by repeating their determination, with the means which God and Nature had put into their hands, to oppose such unprovoked and unjustifiable proceedings. [y]

1585.

Conduct and discontent of the King.

During the progress of these interesting events, Henry, irresolute, unable to recede, and irritated against the faction which was about to render him the reluctant instrument of their ambitious views, beheld before him the immediate prospect of a civil war. His discontent manifested itself, notwithstanding the presence of the Cardinal of Guise, in the severe language and indirect reproaches with which he loaded the Parisians; who, after engaging him in a rupture with the Protestants, from their antipathy to heresy, expressed no inclination to submit to the pecuniary burthens, necessary for carrying on hostilities. Desirous to try all expedients in order to avert so great a calamity, of which he was only the involuntary cause, and of which he foresaw that he must ultimately become the victim, he resolved to attempt anew to shake the constancy of the King

[y] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 332—334.

of

of Navarre; and with that hope he again dispatched an embassy to the court of Nerac. Every offer was held out by Henry, which could prevail upon his brother-in-law, if not to renounce his religion, and embrace the Catholic faith; at least to suspend for a limited time, the exercise of the Hugonot worship in Bearn, and to surrender the places of security put into the hands of the Protestants, at the last treaty of peace. In case of the refusal of the King of Navarre to consent to concessions so important, the embassadors were ordered to insist, that he should issue directions to stop the march of the German auxiliaries, who were ready to enter the kingdom. But, that prince did not think proper to comply with any of the requisitions; and he besought the King not to expect, that whatever desire he might have to manifest his allegiance, he could carry his obedience so far, as tamely to present his neck to his implacable enemies. He adjured His Majesty not to abandon his own honour, by uniting with traitors; and he expressed his readiness to meet the Queen-mother, for the purpose of adjusting the terms of a final accommodation, provided that Henry would previously withdraw his forces from all the provinces south of the Loire.[z]

CHAP. V.

1585. 25th August. Embassy to the King of Navarre.

Propositions rejected.

No alternative except war remained after such a reply, and "the League," already pos- Death of Gregory the Thirteenth.

[z] Davila, p. 573 and 574. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 437—340. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 293.

sessed

CHAP. V.

1585. sessed of all the authority of the crown, had received a further accession of strength, by the demise of Gregory the Thirteenth. That aged pontiff, who could never be induced to give his unqualified approbation to their schemes, expired after a reign of thirteen years; and

10th April. Election of Sixtus the Fifth. was succeeded by the celebrated Felix Perretti, better known in history under the title of Sixtus the Fifth. He commenced his short, but memorable pontificate, by the severest punishment of the outrages and crimes, common in every part of the territories of the church, and from which the city of Rome itself was not secure or exempt. The timid and moderate character of his predecessor had encouraged these atrocities, by the impunity with which they were attended; but the inexorable severity of Sixtus, speedily restored order and submission to the laws. The arrogance and violence of his disposition, led him easily to comply with the entreaties made to him by the emissaries of the house of Guise; and at their instigation, soon

21st September. *Bull*, published by him against the King of Navarre. after his accession to the chair of St. Peter, he issued a *bull*, by which he declared the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé excommunicated, and incapable of succeeding to the crown of France. This political malediction was accompanied with epithets the most opprobrious, applied to the two princes themselves, who were stigmatized as apostates, heretics, and enemies of God and man. Their vassals or subjects were released from all obedience; and Henry was exhorted, in his capacity of the

most Christian King, to extirpate the race of Bourbon, and to carry the Papal sentence into immediate execution.[a] CHAP. V. 1585.

So indecent and insulting a display of the plenitude of the apostolic power, such as it had been exercised by Gregory the Seventh, or by Boniface the Eighth, excited various and opposite emotions, on its promulgation in France. The partizans of "the League," elated at the favourable interference of the sovereign pontiff, expressed their satisfaction and triumph by every possible means. Paris was inflamed, and the passions of the populace were irritated, by seditious preachers; who ascending the pulpits, harangued the multitude, and pointed their detestation not only against the Protestants, but against Epernon, and other persons suspected of attachment to the princes of the blood. On the other hand, Henry, however servile and tame he appeared in his acquiescence with the requisitions of the Duke of Guise, could not avoid feeling and resenting an outrage, which, though apparently pointed against heresy, did not less attack the majesty of the throne, and the independance of his crown. He well knew, that under the minority of his brother Charles the Ninth, twenty-three years preceding, when Pius the Fourth, who then occupied the Papal chair, had ventured to excommunicate Jane d'Albert, Queen of Navarre, the ministers of that period had not

Effects produced by it.

Conduct of Henry.

[a] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 368—371.

CHAP. V.

submitted in silence to the indignity. The Constable Montmorenci, and the Chancellor l'Hopital, who then presided in the cabinet of France, had compelled the see of Rome to revoke, and even to suppress the *bull*, as injurious to a sovereign princess so nearly allied to the royal family. But Henry, already engaged in a war for the purpose of exterminating the Hugonots, and apprehensive of giving any cause of offence to the adherents of "the League," contented himself with a more indirect mode of disapprobation, by only prohibiting its publication.[b]

1585.

He indirectly opposes it.

Generous answer of the King of Navarre, to the *bull*.

The King of Navarre, restrained by no considerations of that nature, and following only the impulse of his indignation, took more efficacious measures for resenting the insult. Unawed by any terror of the pontifical power, he caused a reply to the bull of excommunication to be published, and affixed in the most public places of Rome itself. Neither the person, nor the dignity of Sixtus, were respected in the composition. With the generous warmth of a high-spirited and injured prince, he gave to the pretended successor of St. Peter, the epithets of a calumniator and a lyar; appealed from his sentence, to the decision of a general council of the church; and declared mortal and irreconcilable war against him, as the enemy of God, and as Antichrist. He reminded Sixtus, that his own ancestors of the house of Bour-

5th November.

[b] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 374—376.

bon, had formerly repressed the arrogance and audacity of the bishops of Rome; and added, that as he was no way inferior to his most illustrious predecessors, he trusted by the divine aid, to exact a signal and exemplary vengeance for the late outrage. He concluded by appealing to all the allies of France, and to all the crowned heads or princes of Europe, against the tyranny of the Romish see; and not less against the enterprizes of "the League," as the common foes of God, the King, and the state.[c]

CHAP V. 1585.

An answer so undaunted, made by a prince under circumstances the most adverse, excited universal admiration. All the moderate and dispassionate part of the French nation, respected the courage and elevation of mind which could dictate it; and the Catholics themselves, far from approving the excommunication, saw with regret and concern, that its effects would prove more beneficial than injurious, to the party against whom it was directed. Even Sixtus himself, who, from the superiority of his own understanding, knew how to appreciate the great qualities of an enemy, conceived from this proof of magnanimity, the highest opinion of the King of Navarre. The Pope did not conceal his sentiments; expressed his esteem for a constancy and firmness which no external accidents could depress; and uniformly refused to open the treasury of the church, or to contribute in any manner towards the war declared against the Hugonots.

Approbation which it excited.

[c] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 376—378. Davila, p. 574—576.

CHAP. V.

1585. New edict of Henry. 16th October.

The hostilities which "the League," under the name and shelter of the crown, had been so long preparing, at length commenced. They were preceded by a new edict, issued on the part of the passive and reluctant King, whom the Guises had compelled, against his inclination, to attack the King of Navarre. It reduced to the short term of fifteen days, the remainder of the six months allowed to the adherents of the reformed religion, for quitting the kingdom; and enjoined the confiscation and public sale of all their effects, at the end of that period. The Duke of Guise having signified to Henry, his desire of commanding the forces which were to be stationed on the eastern frontier, in order to oppose the entrance of the Germans into the kingdom; his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, was appointed to conduct the army destined to march against the King of Navarre, in Guienne. But, Henry, though he did not venture by open force to repress the enterprizes of that powerful family, took effectual precautions to impede their military operations. Matignon, a man devoted to the crown, received ostensible orders to co-operate with Mayenne: but in reality, his secret instructions were of an opposite nature; and the delays or obstacles which he continually framed, when added to the advanced season of the year, prevented any enterprize of moment from being undertaken on the part of the Catholics.[d]

Conduct of that monarch.

[d] Davila, p. 572 and 573. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 379.

Mean-

CHAP. V.

1585.

Meanwhile, the Hugonots, neither depressed by the late edict, nor dismayed by the vast disparity of force, prepared with vigour for their defence. The King of Navarre, after publishing a counter edict, justifying his resistance on the principle of necessity, and commanding the seizure of the effects of the inhabitants, in all the cities which had enforced the royal orders, assembled his troops on the banks of the Garonne. In Dauphiné, Lesdiguieres obtained many advantages over the Catholics, and reduced to his obedience the greater part of that mountainous province. Another of their chiefs, the Viscount of Turenne, penetrated into the Limousin, one of the most central portions of France; while the Prince of Condé, drove the Duke of Mercœur out of Poitou, with considerable loss. Emboldened by his success, the Prince pushing his advantages, laid siege to Brouage, a town of importance, near Rochelle: and he was on the point of compelling the garrison to capitulate, when he received intelligence that the castle of Angers had been surprized by a small number of his adherents. Elated at so unexpected and prosperous an event, which opened a prospect of transferring the theatre of war from Poitou, to the rich provinces beyond the Loire, and even of eventually approaching Paris; he instantly determined to quit the prosecution of his present undertaking, and to advance without delay, to the assistance of his friends. Many of his officers remonstrated with him on

Preparations of the Hugonots, for their defence.

30th November.

Operations of the war.

Enterprize of Angers.

CHAP. V.

1585. 8th October.

the danger, if not the temerity of such an attempt: they represented the nature of the season, already far advanced; the difficulty of passing so broad a river as the Loire, swelled by autumnal rains; and the uncertainty of the castle holding out till his arrival. But, the Prince, whose active intrepidity qualified him for the most arduous enterprizes, and whom obstacles only irritated, remained firm to his purpose. He immediately began his march, at the head of a chosen body of his friends and soldiers, effected his passage across the Loire, and after surmounting many impediments, appeared before Angers.

The Prince of Condé passes the Loire.

21st October.

By a surprizing and almost unparalleled series of accidents, in which fortune had a greater share than ability or courage, the three officers who originally gained possession of the castle, had already perished. The private soldiers, only sixteen in number, who remained, destitute of any chief, and being of opposite religious persuasions, agreed to surrender; and on the day preceding the arrival of Condé, they had actually put the castle into the hands of the Duke of Joyeuse, commander of the royal forces. Notwithstanding so severe a disappointment, intelligence of which the Prince did not receive till he was in sight of Angers, he persisted to attack the city. But his troops, discouraged, and opposed by superior numbers, giving way, it became expedient to retreat. The attempt was difficult and almost impracticable, as the Catholics, apprized of the expedition, had assembled to intercept

He attacks Angers.

His retreat and flight.

intercept his flight, or his passage over the Loire. Beset by enemies, he reluctantly consented therefore to adopt the only means of extrication left; that of dividing his troops into small parties, who might evade the vigilance of their numerous opponents. The expedient being embraced, was attended with uncommon success, almost all the soldiers having rejoined their standards, without loss. The Prince of Condé himself, whose capture was regarded as so certain, that the Parisians already anticipated the spectacle of a prince of the blood brought prisoner to the capital; followed only by a few friends, took the route of Normandy. Passing over without delay into the island of Guernsey, he pursued his voyage from thence to the court of England, to solicit the protection of Elizabeth.[e]

CHAP. V. 1585.

He escapes to England.

While France, in consequence of Henry's refusal to accept the sovereignty of the Netherlands, was thus involved in all the calamities inseparable from civil war, the Prince of Parma, had nearly atchieved the total reduction of Flanders and Brabant to the obedience of Spain. That great commander, profiting of the dissentions of the Flemings, and of the death of the Prince of Orange, pushed his operations with augmented vigour. Brussels being reduced to the last extremities of famine, capitulated, and obtained honourable conditions. The Catho-

Reduction of Flanders and Brabant.

Brussels surrenders, 13th Mar.

[e] D'Aubig. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 440—452. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 385—398. Davila, p. 582—587. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 294—296.

CHAP. V.

1585. April.

lics, who formed the most numerous part of the inhabitants of Nimeguen, having expelled or overpowered the Protestants, opened their gates to the Spaniards. By the important acquisition of a city situate on the Waäl, which river washes the walls of Nimeguen; Guelderland, and even the provinces of Holland and Utrecht, became in some degree open to the incursions of the enemy. Mechlin, invested on all sides, and hopeless of relief, surrendered at discretion. Antwerp alone still continued, after near a year, to resist the utmost efforts of the besiegers. Assisted by engineers of the most consummate skill, and sustained by their detestation of the tyranny of Philip, they not only rejected every offer of accommodation; but repeatedly attacked with success the works constructed across the channel of the Schelde, by which the Prince of Parma had intercepted the supplies of provisions. Exhausted at length by fruitless endeavours to blow up, or to destroy the bridge, which extended from one side of the river to the other; repulsed in their sallies, and beginning to experience the pressure of famine; they opened a negotiation with the Spanish general. It was soon terminated; and that celebrated city, which had long constituted the Emporium of the North, but which had experienced during the last twenty years, every variety of desolation, pillage, and misfortune, submitted reluctantly to its former master. Philip, whose bigotry and violence had banished order, tranquillity, and commerce from

and Mechlin. 21st June.

Surrender of Antwerp. 17th August.

from the Netherlands; after exhausting the immense resources of the monarchy of Spain, in his attempt to reduce the Flemings, beheld himself again in possession of the ten southern provinces. But, the spirit which once animated that mass, the trade of Antwerp, of Bruges, of Ghent, and so many other flourishing cities, the seats of industry, had fled with their civil and religious liberties: while Amsterdam, hitherto concealed by its own obscurity among marshes and shoals, on the banks of the Zuyder sea, began to emerge; and all the sources of wealth were irrecoverably transferred from the Schelde to the Texel.[f] CHAP. V. 1585.

In this extremity, the Dutch people, already united among themselves by the closest political tyes, and masters of the seven northern provinces of the Low Countries, extending from the Maese, nearly to the Emms; far from yielding to despair, displayed an unshaken fortitude. Deprived of the assistance and cooperation of the Flemings; rejected in their application to the King of France; and on the point of being attacked by the victorious troops of Spain, conducted by the greatest general of the age; they determined to implore the aid of Elizabeth, Queen of England. While Antwerp, reduced to extremity, though not surrendered, still continued to resist; an embassy, composed of the most illustrious persons from all the provinces yet unsubdued, arrived in Dutch implore the aid of the Queen of England. 6th July.

[f] Strada, vol. iv. p. 1—149. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 417—442.

London,

CHAP. V.

1585. London, and offered the sovereignty to that princess, on terms similar to those which had been proposed to Henry the Third, for his acceptance. Following the dictates of the cautious and sagacious policy, which during her long reign, had always tempered and restrained the natural magnanimity of her character, she declined the proposition in its full extent, as receiving them into the number of her subjects: but she at the same time assured the States of her immediate, and efficacious protection.

10th August. Treaty between Elizabeth and the Dutch. By a treaty concluded with them, she stipulated to send over five thousand infantry, and one thousand cavalry into Holland, under an experienced commander, to whom extensive civil and military authority should be confided. These troops, which the Queen engaged to maintain at her own expence during the continuance of the war, were to be defrayed after its conclusion, by the Dutch: and as pledges for their repayment of the money necessary to be disbursed by the crown of England, the towns of the Brille, and Flushing, together with the castle of Rammekins, all situate in the maritime province of Zealand, were consigned to Elizabeth. Unterrified by the menaces, and unaffected by the alarming preparations of Philip in all his ports, to invade her in her own dominions, she speedily accomplished

December. English troops sent to Zealand. the conditions. The English succours landed in Zealand: and though her partiality for an unworthy favourite, induced her to commit so important an expedition, and to confide so vast a charge,

a charge, to Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who abused his power, and tarnished the lustre of his sovereign's arms; yet the timely assistance extended by her to the Dutch, rendered ineffectual all the exertions of Spain, while it finally established the existence and independance of the seven united provinces. [g]

CHAP. V. 1585.

[g] Hume, Hist. of Eng. vol. v. p. 269—273. Strada, vol. iv. p. 176—185. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 447—452.

CHAP. VI.

Letters addressed by the King of Navarre, to the different orders of the kingdom. — Campaign in Guienne and Poitou. — Conduct of Henry. — His journey to Lyons. — Audience and answer given by him, to the German embassy. — Operations of the Duke of Guise. — Conference of St. Brix. — State of Paris. — Machinations of "the League." — Henry disconcerts them. — Success of Joyeuse. — Entrance of the Germans and Switzers into Lorrain. — Inactivity of the King. — Duke of Guise defends France. — Battle of Coutras. — Progress of the foreign army. — Defeat of Vimory. — Second defeat, at Auneau. — Flight of the Germans and Switzers. — Treaty concluded with them, by Henry. — Exploits and personal glory of the Duke of Guise. — Return of the King to Paris. — Foreign affairs.

CHAP. VI.

1586. King of Navarre addresses letters to the different orders; 1st January.

DURING these important transactions in the Netherlands, where the powerful interposition of Elizabeth rendered new efforts on the part of Philip the Second, indispensable for the reduction of his revolted subjects; the King of Navarre, apprehensive of being crushed by the confederacy of the crown with the forces of "the League," prepared to sustain so severe a shock. Previous to the commencement of any military operations, he again addressed letters from Montauban in Languedoc, to the different orders of the kingdom. In his appeal to the clergy, he reprobated the ambition of the

the Guises, who under the veil of religion, had not scrupled to involve France in civil war; had compelled the King to violate his own treaties concluded with the Hugonots; and had sacrificed all the liberties of the Gallican church, in order to obtain the protection of the see of Rome. His address to the French nobility, by the affectionate and endearing manner, in which he implored their exertions to avert the calamities impending over their country; and by the reluctance which he expressed to shed the blood of a class of subjects, selected for the ornament and defence of the throne; was calculated to make a deep impression on that body. In his letter to the third estate, he pointed out, and lamented the heavy pecuniary burthens about to be imposed on them, solely to gratify the malevolence and injustice of a powerful faction, who had made their sovereign the instrument of their own vengeance; and who prosecuted their private ambition or animosities, in the name, and at the expence of the nation. To the city of Paris, he recalled the recollection of their antient loyalty and adherence to their kings: he conferred just eulogiums on the reluctance which they had manifested, to contribute towards the support of hostilities so unprovoked; and he professed his readiness to submit all his opinions to the arbitration of a council, sanctioned and confirmed by the States General of France. [a]

1586.

and to the city of Paris.

[a] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 567—571. Chronol. Novenn. vol. i. p. 21—24.

Con-

CHAP. VI.

1586. Military measures embraced by the King of Navarre.

Conscious however while he made his appeal to the nation, that neither eloquence nor arguments would decide the contest, he at the same time had recourse to arms. Too feeble in pecuniary resources, in numbers, and in all the requisites for a campaign, to venture on meeting his opponents in the field, he embraced a system highly favourable to protracting the war. Having garrisoned his castles situated along the banks of the Dordogne, and the Garonne, two rivers which formed a natural barrier difficult to force; he himself, accompanied only by a chosen body of cavalry, and unencumbered either with baggage or with artillery, repaired in person wherever his presence appeared necessary. The celerity and uncertainty of his movements; the perfect local knowledge which he possessed of the country which formed the seat of war; when added to the decision of his natural character, prompt to conceive, and speedy to execute;—these circumstances enabled him to disconcert, or to baffle all the exertions of the enemy to force him to an action. The qualities which characterized the King of Navarre, were contrasted with the habitual caution and slowness that distinguished the Duke of Mayenne, in every military operation. That general laboured besides under numerous, and almost insurmountable impediments. His army, destitute of artillery, was distressed by the want of pay, and checked by the inclemency of the season. Matignon, jealous of his interference in a province, of which he himself was governor, and secretly

Impediments to the progress of the royal army.

secretly prompted by the King to prosecute the war with languor, interposed perpetual obstacles and delays. After wasting nearly three months before they entered Guienne, during which time the troops were considerably diminished by distempers, an open misintelligence broke out between the two commanders. When their operations at length commenced, they were limited to the siege and capture of some unimportant towns: and Mayenne, irritated with the difficulties opposed to his progress, only waited for the conclusion of the campaign, to demand his dismission from so inglorious and unprofitable a service. [b] 1586.

Feeble operations.

In every part of Poitou and Saintonge, (the La Vendee of the present age,) where the principal strength of the Hugonots was concentered, the exertions on both sides proved equally feeble and indecisive. The Prince of Condé, returning from England, where Elizabeth had supplied him with money, and given him a squadron for his escort back to France; repaired his late disaster before Angers, by redoubled vigilance and activity. Formed by nature for the hardships and dangers of the field, rather than for domestic ties, his heart had notwithstanding, become sensible to the attractions of Catherine Charlotte de la Tremouille: and motives of policy combining with his inclinations, he soon after espoused her, at the city

Marriage of the Prince of Condé.

16th Mar.

[b] Davila, p. 589—592. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 560—566, and 578—582, and 586—592. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 24—32.

of

CHAP. VI. 1586.

of Taillebourg in Saintonge. She was in the bloom of youth, sprung from an illustrious family, and sister to the Duke de la Tremouille, one of the most antient nobility of France, who having embraced the reformed religion, brought a vast accession of force to his new ally. Notwithstanding these circumstances which seemed to promise so much felicity and so many advantages, no nuptials ever proved more inauspicious, nor were terminated by a more tragical catastrophé. Biron meanwhile, at the head of a considerable body of soldiers, approaching Rochelle, laid siege to Marans, a town in its vicinity: but hostilities in that quarter were shortly afterwards suspended by an armistice, agreed on between him and the King of Navarre. It was intended to facilitate a conference, which Catherine of Medicis, at Henry's entreaty, undertook personally to manage, with the view of concluding a final accommodation. Alarmed at the first intelligence of such a design on the part of the King, the Duke of Guise, who was stationed at the other extremity of France, on the frontiers of Champagne, in order to oppose the entrance of the Germans on that side; began to remonstrate with his sovereign, in terms approaching to menace. His efforts to prevent a treaty, which he foresaw must prove fatal to all his ambitious projects, were powerfully supported by the Papal Nuntio; and the discontent of the Parisians, which already threatened an insurrection in the capital, rendered a peace with the King of Navarre,

Armistice. August.

Opposition of the Duke of Guise, to a pacification.

Navarre, a no less unpopular, than dangerous measure.[c]

CHAP. VI.

1586.

Amidst so many calamities by which France was desolated, and with the prospect of still greater evils before him in perspective, Henry preserved all the natural indolence and supineness of his character. Concealed in the recesses of the palace of the Louvre, and besieged by rapacious minions, he emerged at intervals from his repose, only to render himself supremely odious or contemptible. His recreations were as destitute of dignity, as they exhibited proofs of an enervated and effeminate disposition. He was not ashamed to expose himself to the view of his people, in the midst of the metropolis, surrounded with dogs, monkeys, and perroquets, at a time when the kingdom groaned under accumulated, and almost insupportable misfortunes. The expences which he incurred for objects so worthless and puerile, exceeded belief, and necessarily augmented the public indignation. The treasury was exhausted in order to support them, and to maintain the armies acting against the Hugonots, notwithstanding the contributions levied from the clergy, and the alienation of a considerable portion of the royal domain. In this state of embarrassment, seventeen new pecuniary edicts, imposing taxes to a very considerable amount, were sent to the parliament of Paris, by the royal order.

Indolence of Henry.

His profusion, and oppressions.

[c] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 573—577, and 583—586. Davila, p. 592—594, and p. 600. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 19—22. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 300—304.

CHAP. VI.

1586.

16th June.

But the members of that assembly, animated with a generous spirit of resentment at the abuse of the prerogative of the crown, refused to sanction, or to register such oppressive impositions. Henry was necessitated to appear in person, in order to surmount their opposition, and his presence was productive of submission. The murmurs, excited by such arbitrary and injudicious measures, were not however less universal; and experience soon convinced him, how dangerous it is to exhaust the patience and loyalty of a great people.

Monastic and superstitious practices of the King.

Passing rapidly from the indulgences of luxury and dissipation, to the renunciations of a severe and monastic life, the King, not content with mingling in processions, and undertaking pilgrimages to various altars or shrines renowned for their sanctity; abandoned frequently all the duties and functions annexed to his high station, in order to immure himself with Hieronimites, or Feuillans. These orders of Cenobites or Monks, introduced by himself among the French, and the former of which he had caused to be brought from Spain, into his dominions; were stationed in the wood of the castle of Vincennes, in the immediate vicinity of Paris, where cells were constructed for their accommodation and residence; or in the suburbs nearly adjoining the palaces of the Louvre and the Tuilleries. After passing some days in the supposed exercise of mortification and abstinence among them, he would suddenly re-appear in the habit of a penitent, in the streets of the metropolis, followed by a num-

number of Flagellants, inflicting discipline on themselves. He even carried his devotion, or his hypocrisy, to so great a length, as usually to wear about his waist a large chaplet, the grains or beads of which were cut in the shape of skulls. Mixing a capricious taste for the elegant arts, with the practices of a groveling superstition, he amused himself with collecting, at whatever price, the most costly paintings upon vellum, executed by the greatest artists of Italy, with which he ornamented the walls of his chapels. So many symptoms of a depraved mind, or of an alienated understanding, made a deep impression on the inhabitants of the capital; who, inflamed by seditious preachers, and no longer restrained by any respect for the person, or the character of their sovereign, began to listen to the most daring proposals of insurrection and rebellion.[d]

1586.

His amusements and recreations.

The Protestant princes of Germany having determined on sending an embassy to France, for the purpose of supplicating the King to terminate the war commenced against the Hugonots, he quitted Paris, and repaired to Lyons. Various motives induced him to undertake so long a journey, at so critical a juncture. By delaying to give audience to the German embassadors, he flattered himself with retaining their sovereigns in uncertainty, as to his intentions respecting peace; and he naturally concluded, that they would suspend their ultimate

He goes to Lyons.

23d July.

Motives for his journey.

[d] L'Etoile, p. 206. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 310 and 311. De Thou, vol. ix. p 594, and p. 599.

CHAP. VI. 1586.

resolution of sending an army to the assistance of the Protestants, till they should be convinced that the measure was indispensable. He likewise anxiously desired to know the result of the intended conference between his mother and the King of Navarre, which might entail consequences of the last importance to his own repose, and to the general felicity of the kingdom. An inducement more powerful over his mind than any motives of a political nature, namely the desire to superintend in some degree the motions of his two favourites, Joyeuse, and Epernon, impelled him to fix his residence at Lyons. Not satisfied with the acquisition of offices, dignities, and emoluments of every kind, the ambition of these powerful minions aspired to the separate command of two armies: and the facility of Henry, which equalled his profusion, immediately granted their request, though they possessed scarcely any other qualities requisite for the employment, except personal courage. Their views were likewise widely different, in soliciting the charge. Joyeuse, who had passed the zenith of his favour, and who leaned towards the interests of "the League;" entering the Gevaudan, one of the most wild and inaccessible provinces of the south of France, directed all the force of his exertions against the Hugonots. As they had no regular troops with which to oppose him, he penetrated into that mountainous country, made himself master of several towns, and exercised the utmost violence against the unfortunate

Armies entrusted to Joyeuse and Epernon.

Conduct of Joyeuse.

1586.

nate prisoners who fell into his hands. But, Epernon, whose influence with his master continually augmented, who had manifested his partiality to the interests of the King of Navarre, and who detested the Guises, no less than he was detested by that faction, nourished very opposite wishes or inclinations. He had recently received from the improvident bounty of the King, the government of Provence, which was become vacant by the death of Henry, Count of Angouleme, natural son to Henry the Second. So confirmed was, however, the authority acquired by the partizans of the Duke of Guise in that maritime province, that it appeared to be doubtful whether the new governor could establish his power among a people disaffected to his person, and who had thrown off all respect for the orders of the crown. The entrance of Epernon into the principal cities of Provence, Aix, and Marseilles, was not a little facilitated by a signal victory which Lesdiguieres, at the head of the Protestants, obtained over the troops of the zealous Catholics, conducted by the Baron de Vins, a steady adherent of "the League." Aided by so opportune an event, Epernon, with a well-appointed army, and a numerous artillery, found little resistance; and availing himself of the lassitude or inferiority of the two contending parties, he surmounted all opposition.[e]

Opposite inclinations of Epernon.

[e] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 304 and 305, and 308 and 309. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 599—605, and 615—619. Davila, p. 602—604.

CHAP. VI.

1586. Henry returns to Paris.

Wearied with the complaints of the German embassadors, who having arrived at Paris, waited with impatience for the King's return, in order to obtain an audience, Henry reluctantly repaired to the metropolis. The delegates, addressing him in the names of the three Protestant Electors, those of Saxony, Brandenburg, and the Palatine of the Rhine, as well as of many inferior states and princes of the empire, caused their letters to be publickly read in his presence. Those sovereigns represented with a plain and hardy frankness, characteristic of the German nation, not only the calamities which he inflicted upon France by persecuting his subjects; but, the dishonour and infamy annexed to an unprovoked violation of his own edicts of toleration. In the names of their respective masters, they besought him to suspend the further progress of so unjust a war: and they offered him all the support which he might think proper to demand or accept, if he would turn his efforts against such as had dared, by exciting commotions in his dominions, to conspire against his dignity and repose. Henry was much more sensible to the severity of the former part of the remonstrance, in which his faith and honour were attacked, than he appeared to be touched by the entreaties, or affected by the offers of the German princes. In his reply, he adopted a tone, not only of resentment, but of indignation; and regardless of the consequences, he dismissed the em-

12th October. Remonstrances of the German princes.

Reply of Henry.

bassadors with expressions of contempt and insult.[f]

CHAP. VI.

1586.

Far from being mollified or disarmed nevertheless, by these demonstrations of his apparent aversion to the Hugonots, the Duke of Guise seemed to proceed with augmented boldness and celerity, towards the final execution of his vast designs. While on one hand he caused all the actions of Henry to be misrepresented by his emissaries, and attributed his recent treatment of the Germans, to profound dissimulation; on the other, he employed the troops under his command, in enterprizes unauthorized by the King, contrary to his orders, and injurious to his interests. As the territories of the Duke of Bouillon, who professed the reformed religion, might from their position greatly facilitate the entrance of foreign forces into Champagne; it was determined to invade them, although no provocation had been given, nor act of hostility committed on his part. Donzy, and afterwards Rocroi, were attacked and taken by the Duke of Guise; who continuing his incursions, made himself master of Raucour, and menaced Sedan itself, the capital of the little principality. He was diverted from a further prosecution of the enterprize against the Duke of Bouillon, by the refusal of the city of Auxonne in Burgundy, to receive a garrison in the name of the Duke of Mayenne.

Measures of the Duke of Guise.

He attacks the Duke of Bouillon.

[f] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 606—610. Davila, p. 604—606.

CHAP. VI.

1586.

The place being instantly invested, was captured; while the Duke of Aumale, another individual of the same family, governor of Picardy, seized upon Dourlens, and the principal towns situate along the banks of the river Somme. All the eastern provinces, including a vast portion of France, extending nearly from the gates of Calais uninterruptedly, to those of Lyons, were already in the dependance of "the League." The chiefs of the union, emboldened by Henry's timidity, and irritated at the obstacles which he had contrived to oppose to the military progress of Mayenne, met at the abbey of Orcamp, near Noyon in Picardy; where they proceeded to embrace resolutions subversive of all obedience to the crown. They agreed to continue the war undertaken against the Duke of Bouillon; to render themselves masters of the whole duchy; and regardless of the King's approbation, whom they accused of indirectly sustaining the Hugonots, to push their operations with redoubled vigour, in every possible direction.[s]

Power of "the League."

30th September. Resolutions of the chiefs.

Views and measures of Henry.

While the Duke of Guise was thus employed, the King, averse to a war which interrupted his habitual indolence, terrified at the prospect of a foreign army of Germans, which impended over his dominions, and incensed at the daring projects of a faction, no longer restrained by any remains of allegiance or duty; turned his

[s] Davila, p. 614—616. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 610—612. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 304 and 307.

whole

whole attention towards the result of the conference carrying on between his mother and the King of Navarre. Catherine of Medicis, though sinking in years, and oppressed by infirmities, yet did not decline on that account, any occasion of exerting her influence, or of rendering her services necessary to the state. If ever, in any of her negotiations with the Hugonots, she can be regarded as having acted with sincerity, it was unquestionably on this occasion. She beheld the ruin into which her son was plunged, and to which she had, herself, been accessary, by the indirect support given to the projects of the Guises. An expedient presented itself for uniting the two kings, while it perpetuated the crown in her own immediate descendants, and effectually crushed the pernicious attempts of the enemies of the state. Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, was not only destitute of issue; but her abandoned conduct and dissolute life had rendered her unworthy to ascend the throne, or even to share her husband's bed. Sheltered among the mountains of Auvergne, in the castle of Carlat where she resided, she was already forgotten; and it could not be difficult to obtain from the see of Rome, a dissolution of the marriage. Christina, Princess of Lorrain, grand-daughter of Catherine, by her daughter Claudia, and niece of Henry, might then supply Margaret's place; and the beauty of her person was encreased by the modesty of her deportment. In order to give its full effect to the proposition, Christina accompanied the Queen-

CHAP. VI. 1586.

CHAP. VI. 1586.

Queen-mother to St. Brix, a small town on the river Charente, near Cognac in the province of Angoumois; where, after many difficulties and precautions taken for his personal security, the King of Navarre repaired.

Interview of St. Brix. 18th October.

The interview commenced by mutual reproaches, calculated to conceal the real object of the conference: but, in the more private communications, Catherine, by authority of her son, offered him the young princess, together with a declaration of his right to the throne, in case of the death of Henry without male issue.

Offers of Catherine, to the King of Navarre.

She enforced the proposal by every argument drawn from his own situation, and the condition of the kingdom itself, which so loudly called for an effectual remedy to its multiplied and encreasing misfortunes. His resumption of the Catholic religion, and his return to court, were the sacrifices demanded in return of the King of Navarre. Flattering as these offers seemed, he notwithstanding rejected them, after a delay of only two days. The same reasons which had influenced his determination, when Epernon was dispatched to him by Henry in 1584, at the time of the Duke of Anjou's death, not only subsisted in their full force, but were even strengthened by the interval of time.

Motives for their rejection.

He was well acquainted with the King's aversion to the Hugonots; he distrusted Catherine; and he was not ignorant, that negotiations with the Guises were carrying on, at the moment when the animosity of the royalists and the adherents of "the League," seemed

to

CHAP. VI. 1586.

to render impossible all reconciliation between them. Above every other consideration, he dreaded with reason to commit himself a second time, to the mercy of a faithless prince, and of a tumultuous capital, destitute of obedience to the crown, inflamed by seditious demagogues or preachers, and the populace of which held his person and religion in equal execration. The Queen-mother vainly attempted to surmount impediments of such magnitude and solidity, by urging the impossibility of Henry's entering into new and indissoluble connexions of policy, with an excommunicated heretic. All her arguments proved ineffectual; and the King of Navarre, after reiterating his professions of loyalty to the state, and of gratitude to his sovereign, whom he offered to join with his own troops and the German auxiliaries, in order to exterminate their common enemies, finally withdrew from the conference. It was nevertheless continued for some time longer, in the name of the two Kings, by the intervention of the Duke of Nevers, and the Viscount Turenne: but, far from diminishing the difficulties opposed to an accommodation, they only rendered them more apparent and insurmountable. [h]

Ineffectual conclusion of the conference.

The

[h] Davila, p. 616—620. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 619—622. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 22—24. Chronol. Novennaire, vol. i. p. 31 and 32.

Davila alone, of all the contemporary historians, seems to have been fully informed of the secret object of the conference of St. Brix, and of the offer made of the Princess Christina of Lorrain, as the future wife of the King of Navarre. His relation of every circumstance attending the interview, is too minute, and his authorities are known to have been too high, to call in question his veracity. De Thou

CHAP. VI.

1586. State of the Metropolis.

The indefatigable exertions of the partizans of "the League," had in no part of the kingdom been attended with such complete success,

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Thou, who in all respects must be regarded as the most judicious and able writer of his age, does not appear to have been acquainted with the concealed nature of Catherine's proposals, nor even to have known that Christina herself was conducted in person to St. Brix. He omits her name at least, in his enumeration of the persons of distinction who accompanied the Queen-mother, though he mentions Catherine of Bourbon, Abbess of Soissons, aunt to the King of Navarre. In D'Aubigné, are contained many curious and interesting particulars concerning the interview: but, neither in his recital, nor in the "Chronologie Novennaire," is the offer of Christina specified. Those authors were probably ignorant of the fact. Sully passes over in silence the conference of St. Brix; and there is no mention whatever of it, in the "Journal d'Henry III." Even by the testimony of Davila, whose partiality towards his benefactress, Catherine of Medicis, renders him on that point more deserving of credit, the King of Navarre was justified in not accepting the proposals made to him, however apparently brilliant. It appears, that at the very moment when Henry commissioned his mother to urge their immediate acceptance, he was treating with the heads of "the League;" and that he had assured the papal Nuntio, the Duke of Guise, and the Parisians, of his determination to conclude no treaty with the Hugonots, which would not be found ultimately for the benefit of the Catholic religion. If we reflect on the similar protestations made by Charles the Ninth, to the Legate, before the massacre of Paris; and if we consider how little reliance could be placed on the oaths of so fickle or feeble a prince as Henry the Third, or so treacherous and faithless a woman as the Queen-mother, secretly attached to the party of the Guises; we shall see ample reason for approving the determination of the King of Navarre, independant of every motive drawn from those sentiments of honor, decorum, and conscience, which must have opposed a renunciation of his religion.

D'Aubigné relates, that the Duke of Nevers said to the King of Navarre, in the course of the conversations; "Sire, you would act "better to make your court to our common sovereign and master, "than to the Mayor of Rochelle, from whom, in your greatest neces- "sity, you cannot extort the smallest assistance." "We do not," answered that Prince, "understand the science of imposing con- "tributions; for, we have no Italians among us: but, at Rochelle I "do every thing that I wish, by only desiring to do what I ought."

Under

cess, as among the inhabitants of the metropolis; where the personal weaknesses and vices of the sovereign being more intimately known, had withdrawn the obscurity which veiled the throne from the rest of Henry's subjects, placed at a distance from the seat of government. His ill-timed clemency and lenity, if the inactivity and apathy of that prince can be justly so entitled, towards all those individuals who distinguished themselves by acts of daring outrage against him, seemed to secure impunity, while it provoked resistance. Every art, calculated to inflame a bigotted, sanguinary, and furious multitude, was practised in order to render the King odious, as well as suspected. Their credulity, proportioned to their ignorance, made them susceptible of any impression, and led them to swallow the most improbable fictions. Notwithstanding the incontestable proofs, which throughout his whole reign, the King had given of attachment to the ancient religion, and of an equal aversion to the reformed doctrines; the Parisians considered him as privately leagued with the King of Navarre, for the extirpation

CHAP. VI. 1587.

Credulity of the Parisians.

Under Henry the Third, not only almost all the financiers, contractors, and persons who farmed the revenues, were natives of Italy; but the Duke of Nevers himself, who descended from the House of Gonzaga, which reigned at Mantua, was of the same country.

It is somewhat singular, that De Thou fixes the conference to have taken place on the 13th of December; D'Aubigné, in the beginning of March; and Davila, on the 18th of October. As there were many interviews, and much time was consumed in them, we must account for so extraordinary a contradiction of these three historians, from that circumstance.

of

CHAP. VI. 1587.

of the Catholic faith. His retirements to the castle of Vincennes, for the ostensible purposes of maceration and devotion, were stigmatized, as only concealing the most enormous and profligate debaucheries. Even the clergy, with the exception of certain monastic orders whom he peculiarly favoured and enriched, became the instruments to withdraw from him the allegiance of the people. In the Confessionals, under the seal of secrecy in the performance of an act enjoined by the Romish church, every treasonable and seditious principle was silently inculcated, and deeply impressed: while from the pulpit, the more eloquent and audacious preachers declaimed against their sovereign, and openly exposed his enormities, or arraigned his administration. Already, in almost all the various professions, trades, and obscure walks of inferior life throughout the capital, persons selected for their activity and zeal, met under cover of the night, to communicate their operations, and to regulate or combine their respective proceedings. When we consider these facts, and compare them with the conduct of the Jacobin Clubs, or other insurrectionary meetings in 1789, which preceded the French Revolution, we shall perceive the striking analogy between the Parisian populace of the sixteenth, and of the eighteenth century. The more we contemplate the two periods of time, the more deeply will this truth be impressed on the mind, in all its extent. It becomes developed

Disaffection of the clergy.

loped with additional force, as we proceed to the close of Henry's life and reign. CHAP. VI.

1587. Plans for an insurrection.

Paris being divided into sixteen wards or districts, a council, composed of as many men, chosen from each, was formed, in order to direct and superintend the movements of the subordinate actors. Numerous individuals, alarmed at the pretended danger of a subversion of the national religion, though not otherwise disaffected to the crown, were admitted to the nocturnal assemblies, and gradually initiated in their mysteries. Among the most distinguished leaders of the cabal, was Bussy le Clerc, who, after having followed the profession of a fencing-master, had obtained a place of solicitor in the parliament of Paris. La Chappelle Marteau, a man of desperate fortune, pursued by his creditors, occupied likewise a high place in the seditious meetings. They all received their instructions from Mainville, the agent and minister of the Duke of Guise; a young man of superior extraction, possessing eloquence, capacity, and an unbounded devotion to the cause in which he had engaged. These qualities were however, contrasted with equal arrogance, insolence, and temerity.[1]

Arts of "the League" to inflame the Parisians.

Many artifices were used, and numerous expedients devised, in order to sustain the flame of sedition among the multitude. The confessors, abusing to purposes of destruction, the sacred function of their clerical office, denied

[1] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 649—652. Davila, p. 606. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 12—15.

absolution

CHAP. VI. 1587.

absolution to such as refused to enter into the association. Processions, composed not only of the inhabitants of Paris, but from Picardy, Lorrain, and other provinces, consisting of persons of both sexes, dressed in white, and having crosses fastened on their habits, continually kept alive the general ferment; while they were favourable to the designs of the chief conspirators. Emissaries of approved zeal and capacity, were sent into the country, to spread the tenets, and augment the proselytes of "the League." They artfully addressed themselves to those whose embarrassed circumstances, or profligate character, rendered their seduction easy; and they exaggerated the forces, military as well as pecuniary, possessed by the Duke of Guise, who constituted the object of their supreme idolatry. If we substitute the name of the Duke of Orleans, for that of Guise, and replace the term of religion, by liberty and equality; we shall perceive that the same ends were attained by the same means, under the last prince of the line of Valois, and of the House of Bourbon. Though Henry the Third was one of the most profligate, and Louis the Sixteenth was one of the most virtuous kings who have reigned in France; yet their tame or passive submission to the inroads of popular innovation, instead of opposing to it a firm resistance, formed a strong resemblance between them, and led to the Catastrophé which swallowed up both, while it plunged their country in civil war and anarchy.

So

1587.

So numerous and ardent a body of men as had been collected in the capital, disposed to engage in the most desperate schemes, could not without difficulty be restrained from anticipating the cautious projects of the leaders, and proceeding to immediate extremities. As a prelude to greater and more decisive enterprizes, an attempt was formed against the city of Boulogne, of which place Epernon was governor. Mendoza, the Spanish embassador, urged the execution of the plan, with a view of securing a port in the British channel, which from its advantageous geographical situation, might afford a safe and convenient place of refreshment, or of retreat, to the Spanish Armada, already far advanced towards its completion, and destined against England. In order to obtain the consent of the Duke of Guise and of the principal Parisians to such a measure, he promised them that Philip, when they were possessed of Boulogne, would openly join his forces to them, and act in concert with "the League." All the preparations for conducting the attack, were made with such secresy and ability, that its success seemed to have been certain, if it had not been revealed by one of the persons engaged in the design. Poulain, a subordinate officer of the police, although in indigent circumstances, yet, moved by scruples of honour or of loyalty, divulged it to Chiverny, the Chancellor. Precautions so effectual were taken in consequence, that the scheme was not only rendered abortive, but Vetus, the conductor of

Enterprize against Boulogne.

It is divulged, and prevented.

CHAP. VI.

1587.

it, was made prisoner: and the Duke of Aumale, governor of Picardy, who had advanced to support the assailants, escaped with difficulty from an ambuscade, placed to intercept his retreat. Notwithstanding the audacity of an enterprize so treasonable, which demanded the severest punishment, Henry had the weakness, at the solicitation of the Duke of Guise, to liberate Vetus, after a detention of a few months, and to bury in oblivion the whole proceeding.*

Project for seizing, and imprisoning Henry.

Encouraged by the King's pusillanimity or facility, and almost secure of impunity for any crime that they might commit, the leaders proceeded to acts of a more atrocious nature. Though the absence of Guise, and his exhortations not to precipitate affairs, in some degree restrained their ardor; yet, on the arrival of his brother Mayenne, from his campaign against the King of Navarre, the Parisians laid before him a project, of no less magnitude than enormity. It had for its object, the seizure of the King, whom they proposed to confine in a monastery; the imprisonment or massacre of his ministers and favourites; the capture of the Bastile, the Temple, the Arsenal, and the Louvre; and the formation of a new government, composed of their own adherents. As the pillage of the metropolis might become an unavoidable consequence of the execution of the plan, and as their troops might disband, in

* Davila, p. 607 and 608. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 653—658.

order

order to plunder; measures of prevention were taken, by preparing Barricades composed of earth, and chains which could be stretched across the principal streets. Eight thousand armed men were asserted to be in readiness, for effecting the enterprize. Mayenne, naturally cautious, and little disposed to engage in schemes, the execution of which must be committed to a tumultuous and ungovernable populace, was shocked at the atrocity, as well as staggered by the immensity of the proposition. He notwithstanding, after some hesitation and repugnance, consented to avow and join the conspirators, if they should prove successful. CHAP. VI. 1587.

Henry, warned of the design by Poulain, the same faithful spy who had already frustrated the machinations of the Parisians against Boulogne, lost no time in taking effectual steps for his own preservation. The chiefs, ignorant of the quarter from whence they were betrayed, but, deterred by the King's precautions, postponed their measures: while Mayenne, terrified, and expecting hourly to be arrested, or executed as a traitor, was reduced to the necessity of feigning indisposition. Encouraged at length, by the silence or supineness of the government, he ventured to withdraw from Paris, after previously repairing to the Louvre, in order to take leave of his sovereign. Instead of seizing, and bringing him to punishment, Henry dismissed him with a sarcastic reprimand, calculated to incense, but not to deter him from repeating such criminal attempts; The King receives information of it. Alarm of the Duke of Mayenne, at its discovery.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

and the leaders whom he left behind in the capital, neither disheartened nor dejected, ventured to renew them, though with similar success. The remonstrances and menaces of the Duke of Guise, alarmed lest such premature efforts should prevent the final accomplishment of his plans, which time and occasion could alone mature; with difficulty imposed a restraint on their impetuous passions, and withheld them from open insurrection.[1]

Critical condition of the King.

While these appearances of popular discontent manifested themselves in the metropolis, the prospect appeared not less gloomy in every other quarter. The King, whose insurmountable indolence had allowed the factions of his court to attain a degree of strength which he could no longer controul, saw his dominions on the point of being ravaged by foreign forces, as well as by domestic enemies. On one hand, the German auxiliaries, who prepared to march to the assistance of the Hugonots, might be shortly expected to enter France. On the other side, he beheld the Duke of Guise, at the head of a numerous and formidable party, ready to dispute their passage, and to defend the monarchy, of which he himself, as sovereign, was the only natural guardian. His triumph, or his defeat, must even alike prove fatal; since in the former case, he would be left a prey to "the League;" and in the latter event, he would remain at the mercy of the Protestants. Un-

[1] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 659—664. Davila, p. 608—614.

able

able to controul the events which were to decide on the dearest interests of his crown; impelled alternately by opposite and conflicting motives; betrayed or abandoned by the favourites, whom his improvident prodigality had raised to the summit of greatness; and destitute of the vigor or decision, requisite to extricate him from the labyrinth in which he was bewildered, he suffered himself to be borne along by the current: while he seemed to expect from time and accident, the means of surmounting or escaping from the accumulated dangers, which surrounded him on every side.

CHAP. VI.

1587.

His indecision, and misconduct.

The Duke of Joyeuse, less sensible to the benefits received from Henry, than actuated by jealousy at Epernon's pre-eminence in the royal favor; and ambitious to occupy the place which the Duke of Guise had long possessed, as head of "the League;" was desirous to prove himself deserving of so arduous a situation. Having therefore obtained from the King, the command of the army destined to act against the Hugonots, in the western provinces of France, he advanced into Poitou; surprised some troops of the King of Navarre, who were occupied in pillage; and contrary to the terms of the capitulation granted them, as well as to the laws of humanity, caused them indiscriminately to be put to the sword. Elated by his slight success, which was followed with other advantages, and uneasy at the decline of his interest with the King, he returned to court; where he became a spectator of the

Joyeuse marches into Poitou.

August.

He returns to court.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

new and munificent marks of affection showered upon his rival, who had recently solemnized his nuptials with the rich heiress of the house of Candale. Mortified at Epernon's triumph, as well as at the rapid decrease of his own favour; irritated by some expressions, reflecting on his personal courage, that Henry let fall; and humbled by receiving intelligence, that the King of Navarre, during his absence, had driven the royal forces into Touraine, and pursued them to the banks of the Loire; Joyeuse perceived that only some great and eminent military exploit, could maintain him in his present elevation. Under that conviction, he demanded, and obtained permission from the King, to force the Protestants to a decisive engagement. The young nobility, apprized that a general action was about to take place, eager to acquire glory, and captivated by the liberality as well as affability of the commander, flocked to his banner, with demonstrations of the greatest ardor: while Joyeuse, impatient to acquire the laurels, which the superiority of his force seemed to ensure him, lost not a moment in quitting Paris, and by rapid marches advanced to seek the King of Navarre.[m]

Resumes the command.

Germans prepare to invade France.

If the fate of that Prince, which drew to a crisis, powerfully attracted the national attention; the solicitude of Henry was not less

[m] De Thou, vol. x. p. 5—10. Davila, p. 627—630. L'Etoile, p. 227. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 314 and 315.

pain-

painfully awakened to the transactions taking place on the frontiers of Lorrain and Alsace. The Protestant German states, offended at the contemptuous and indignant answer given to their embassadors, at Paris, in the preceding year, had assembled a very considerable army, composed of various nations. The Swiss Cantons of Bern and Zurich, who professed the reformed religion; animated by zeal for the Protestant cause, in defiance of the general treaties subsisting between Henry and the Helvetic confederacy, levied near twenty thousand infantry. Germany furnished four thousand foot, and twelve thousand cavalry; which forces were joined by the Duke of Bouillon soon afterwards, at the head of above two thousand French troops. Regardless of the Imperial mandate, issued by Rodolph the Second, the reigning Emperor, which enjoined them to disband their forces, they assembled near Strasburg, and prepared to commence their march. So vast a body, if they had been properly conducted, might have speedily decided the contest in favour of the party whose interests they espoused But, far from acting in union, or obeying any common head, they were deficient in military discipline, destitute of subordination, and easily inflamed to mutiny upon every occasion. Count Dhona, who exercised the supreme command, in the name, and by the authority of Prince Casimir, Uncle to the Elector Palatine; possessed scarcely any other requisites for the employment,

CHAP. VI.

1587.

20th August.

Dissentions in the army.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

ment, except personal courage: and the Duke of Bouillon's youth, as well as inexperience, disqualified him for so arduous an office.

Notwithstanding these defects in the original formation of the army, which did not manifest themselves till they were matured by various circumstances, their entrance into the kingdom spread universal consternation. No force which the Duke of Lorrain could oppose, through whose territory their march lay, was adequate to impede their progress: and the King of France did not betray any extraordinary alacrity to risk his personal safety, or to endanger the monarchy, by attempting to stem the course of an inundation, which must swallow up the forces of "the League," before it could approach the throne. So convinced indeed, were the Germans and Switzers, of Henry's reluctance to dispute their passage, that they regarded themselves rather as his allies, than as his enemies; and were deluded by the continual expectation, that on their advancing towards the interior provinces, he would join them, with a view to crush their common opponents. Such a measure would have been in fact not only justifiable, but, was become almost indispensable, after the open attacks made on Henry's authority, and it must have rendered him the arbiter of "the "League." But, his irresolution, his aversion to the Hugonots, and the habitual indolence which indisposed him for every exertion of magnitude, overcame all other considerations: and

They enter Lorrain.

Expectations formed by them, of assistance from Henry.

and though during a short interview between him and Guise, which took place at Meaux, his suspicions had been awakened and augmented relative to the intentions of the princes of Lorrain; yet he issued orders to assemble forces, and even prepared to oppose in person, if it should become necessary, the passage of the Germans across the Loire.[a] CHAP. VI. 1587. July.

It must be confessed, that in no part of his life, did the great endowments and superior capacity of the Duke of Guise display themselves more eminently, than when exerted against the foreign army with which France was menaced on this occasion. Uncertain of receiving any effectual support from the crown, and conscious that he had injured his sovereign, beyond the reach of pardon; reproached by the Duke of Lorrain, with having produced the invasion and desolation of his dominions; unable to collect under his standard, a body of forces adequate to meet the enemy in the field, and to try the issue of a battle; beset on every side with difficulties;—the intrepidity of his character, and the decision which marked all his actions, supplied nevertheless these numerous defects. Having advanced in person to reconnoitre the Germans, and being reduced to the necessity of retreating, or of engaging under manifest disadvantages, he preferred death to the appearance of flight. His firmness, aided by the skill of his movements, extri- Able conduct of the Duke of Guise. Magnanimity and courage of

[a] De Thou, vol. x. p. 21—27. Davila, p. 631—635.

cated

CHAP. VI.

1587.

cated him from the danger, and at the same time augmented the confidence of his followers. Retiring before the invaders, as they penetrated into Champagne, he still contrived to harass them in their march: while the Duke of Mayenne having assembled troops in his government of Burgundy, and acting in concert with Guise, hung upon their rear, intercepted their convoys, and began to make them experience the inconveniencies of famine.

his measures.

Discord in the German camp.

Notwithstanding these obstacles to their progress through the interior of the kingdom, they might with ease have atchieved the great object of the expedition, and have effected a junction with the King of Navarre. Chatillon, son to the celebrated Coligni, who inherited no inconsiderable portion of his father's military talents, having been detached to meet and conduct them, earnestly exhorted the leaders to advance towards the sources of the Loire, and to cross the river without delay. But neither Dhona, nor any of the other chiefs, were possessed of sufficient authority to enforce so salutary a counsel. The various and discordant parts of the army, far from being impelled by religious zeal or enthusiasm, were animated by no common sentiment, except the desire of plunder. They dreaded the rugged and mountainous countries, through which they must of necessity pass, in order to avail themselves of Chatillon's advice: and, seduced by the defenceless, as well as fertile nature of the provinces which extend from the limits of Champagne,

Misconduct and errors of the chiefs.

pagne, quite to the gates of Orleans and Chartres; they demanded to be led into districts abounding with provisions, and rich in the opportunities of pillage. To this injudicious measure, was entirely to be attributed their subsequent destruction. The Duke of Guise, well informed of their internal disputes, vigilant to take every advantage of their errors, and revolving in his mind the means of attacking them when too far engaged to retreat, continued to keep them constantly in sight. They were nevertheless sustained by the fallacious expectation, that the King would still ultimately declare in their favor. But, when they beheld Henry himself, at the head of a second army, occupy the banks of the Loire for a considerable extent, and take the most active measures to preclude them from entering Touraine, in which province they hoped to find a means of passing the river; their consternation exceeded any limit. Such was their perilous and almost desperate situation, at the period when in another quarter of the kingdom, the affairs of the Hugonots were completely re-established by the valor, talents, and fortune of the King of Navarre.[o]

CHAP. VI. 1587.

Perilous situation of the army.

The victory of Coutras, which produced so beneficial a change, was however principally due to the temerity and imprudence of the Duke of Joyeuse. That favorite, whose presumptuous ambition prompted him to hazard a

Battle of Coutras.

[o] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 317—320. Davila, p. 637—646. De Thou, vol. x. p. 25—42. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 62 and 63.

general

CHAP. VI. 1587.

general engagement; unwilling to divide the honor of the day with Matignon, who was hastening to reinforce him; and confident in the numbers, as well as in the quality of his troops; felt no other apprehension, except that the enemy would not wait for his approach. But the King of Navarre, far from avoiding an action, having assembled a small body of hardy and experienced veterans, crossed the river Dordogne; and the two armies faced each other, near the town of Coutras in Guienne. The contrast which they exhibited, appeared not less singular, than was presented in antiquity, by the Persians and Macedonians, when they met in the plains of Issus. Among the royal forces, every display of magnificence and luxury was visible: while the Protestants, cased in armour, rusty and defaced by the inclemency of the weather, exhibited a martial and rugged appearance. Nor was the arrogance and want of subordination among the Catholic troops, less forcibly opposed to the discipline and severe obedience enforced by the Hugonots. The effect corresponded to these causes; and never was triumph more rapid, or more compleat, than that which took place at Coutras. Above two thousand of the royalists were left dead upon the field; and all the baggage, artillery, and standards, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

Aspect of the two armies.

20th October.

Victory of the King of Navarre.

Joyeuse himself, after having displayed the greatest personal courage, was put to death, although he offered a prodigious sum to obtain his ransom. The Protestants, incensed

at the recent slaughter of their comrades in Poitou, long refused to grant quarter; and it required all the exertions of the King of Navarre, to stop the carnage. His humanity towards the vanquished, and peculiarly to the prisoners who remained in his possession, appeared not less conspicuous than his valor during the action, and drew eulogiums even from his enemies. The victory was rendered more memorable and conspicuous, from its having been the only advantage obtained by the Hugonots in the field, during the course of more than twenty-seven years, ever since the conspiracy of Amboise, and the commencement of the civil wars. Henry received the intelligence of the defeat at Coutras, not only without any emotions of concern, but rather with sentiments of pleasure. He wished indeed to compel the King of Navarre to accept the conditions which had been tendered him; but was no way desirous of his destruction, or of any event that could augment the power of their common enemies. The spoils of Joyeuse served to decorate his rival, who obtained from the King the government of Normandy, and the post of high-admiral, in addition to all his other dignities; notwithstanding the importunities and solicitation of Guise, who vainly exerted himself to obtain the latter employment for Brissac, one of his own adherents. To these ample gratifications, Henry's profusion, which seemed to know no bounds, added the governments of Saintonge and Angoumois; donations only cal-

Sentiments of Henry, on Joyeuse's defeat and death.

CHAP. VI.

calculated to encrease the general detestation, in which Epernon was held by all the adherents of the family of Lorrain.[p]

1587. King of Navarre returns into Gascony.

Scarcely any advantage resulted to the Germans and Switzers, from so brilliant a victory obtained by the King of Navarre. That prince, unable to retain under his banners, the troops with whom he had conquered; or to prevent the nobility and gentry who voluntarily adhered to him, from withdrawing to their castles; instead of advancing towards the Loire, as might have been expected, immediately returned into Gascony. Perhaps, his attachment to the Countess of Grammont, at whose feet, in the spirit of chivalry, he deposited the trophies of his valor; and the facility with which, at every period of his life, he sacrificed his interests and his duties, to the allurements of gallantry; might have had a share in impelling him to adopt a conduct, by which his glory was not a little obscured. His retreat proved destructive to the foreign army conducted by Dhona, for whose extrication from their augmenting difficulties, the greatest exertions would not have been more than sufficient; and who, thus abandoned to their fate, could neither proceed with confidence, nor retire with safety. Embarrassed with plunder, incommoded by a prodigious quantity of baggage, and diminished by diseases resulting from their intemperance; they

State of the German army.

[p] D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 48—58. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 320—322. De Thou, vol. x. p. 12—18. Davila, p. 646—651.

no longer inspired the terror which had preceded and accompanied their first entrance into France. As they continued their march, various bodies of troops, commanded by the princes of Lorrain, or led by the King in person, straitened their quarters, and augmented their distress. The Duke of Guise, anxious to engross the whole reputation resulting from their defeat, exerted equal vigilance in discovering, as he did promptitude in profiting of their errors. While on one hand, he constantly placed himself between the enemy and the city of Paris, with a view to prevent their approaching the capital; he, on the other, waited to seize the first favourable opportunity of attacking them with advantage. Fortune soon presented him the occasion; and he instantly embraced it, in contradiction to the cautious advice of the Duke of Mayenne, who was not induced without reluctance, to commit the fortune of their family to so imminent a hazard. Having obtained information that a considerable number of the French and German cavalry were lodged at the town of Vimory, he caused them to be surrounded during the night; and after an obstinate resistance, during which, Dhona, their commander, escaped with difficulty, his troops were either routed or put to the sword.[q]

1587.

They are harassed by the Duke of Guise,

and defeated at Vimory.

28th Oct.

Notwithstanding this partial defeat, which inspired the troops of "the League" with as much

They still advance towards the Loire.

[q] De Thou, vol. x. p. 43—45. Davila, p. 651—656.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

much confidence, as it diminished the ardor of the confederates; the latter continued to advance, in hopes of penetrating through the intermediate provinces, to the banks of the Loire, and passing it near the town of Saumur. Their courage was besides not a little revived by the junction of the Prince of Conti, Francis of Bourbon, a younger son of Louis, Prince of Condé, who fell at the battle of Jarnac. His high quality, and proximity of blood to the King of Navarre, sufficiently demonstrated the interest which he took in their success. His arrival was celebrated by festivities and testimonies of public joy, which became further augmented on the intelligence of the victory obtained at Coutras. But, all these premature demonstrations of satisfaction, were speedily succeeded by a total reverse. Dhona having imprudently quartered a part of his forces in the little town of Auneau, where they remained during some days, for the purpose of recovering from their fatigues; Guise, who had encamped in the vicinity, at Dourdan, found means to corrupt the governor of the fortress. In consideration of a sum of money, he promised to admit the Duke's troops through the castle itself, and the enterprize was executed with the most complete success. The enemy, unprepared for defence, and unapprehensive of danger, were invested on every side, attacked, and cut to pieces, before they could make any effectual resistance. Two thousand Germans perished in the action. Dhona, having effected

Defeat of the Germans, at Auneau.

24th November.

fected his escape, as he had before done at Vimory, at the head of a small body of cavalry, safely reached the other divisions of his army, who were stationed in the neighbourhood of Auneau. He instantly drew them up in order of battle, and urged them to attack the victors, during the security of their recent triumph. The French auxiliaries, commanded by Chatillon, joined him in these entreaties, and represented to them the facility of the attempt. But, no arguments could prevail on the Switzers and Germans. Struck with terror, they refused to be led against an enemy who had twice surprized and defeated them, nor were any efforts effectual to vanquish their repugnance. Retreat, or more properly, flight became unavoidable, accompanied with all the calamities inseparable from a dispirited army, labouring under the accumulated evils of famine, cold, and sickness. The Switzers, separating from their allies, concluded an accommodation with the Duke of Epernon, and retired into their own country: while the Germans, exhausted, diminished, and sinking in the roads, began to listen to similar propositions. In this desperate emergency, Chatillon proposed to conduct them towards the province of the Vivarais; a secluded and mountainous region, situate on the western bank of the river Rhone, whose inhabitants had almost universally embraced the doctrines of the reformation; where he assured them that they would be joined by fresh troops, and would find every refresh-

CHAP. VI. 1587.

Retreat, and separation of the foreign troops.

Ineffectual exhortations of Chatillon.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

refreshment necessary to recruit their force. He offered to become their guide during the march, which could not be an enterprize of any length; and he represented with energy and eloquence, the infallible destruction impending over them, if, deluded by a pretended negotiation with the Duke of Guise, ratified in the name of the King, they should trust to the mercy of "the League," who had already thrown off all respect or obedience to the crown.[r]

He quits the army.

His remonstrances proving fruitless, and the spirit of mutiny which pervaded the army, rendering his stay dangerous to himself, he quitted the camp, attended by a few resolute and determined followers. Penetrating through the bodies of the enemy, who surrounded him on every side, he soon reached the provinces where the Hugonot forces maintained a superiority: while Dhona and his associates, no longer restrained by any considerations of national honour, or even of ordinary prudence, consented to evacuate the French dominions, with their colours furled, and escorted to the frontiers of the kingdom. Conditions so ignominious, did not even secure their safe retreat; and the princes of Lorrain, regardless of the stipulations, waited for them beyond the confines. In the County of Burgundy, which province was subject to Spain, and even in the principality of Montbelliard, though a portion of the German empire, the miserable relics of their once formi-

Capitulation of Dhona.

[r] Davilla, p. 656—661. De Thou, vol. x. p. 45—60.

dable

dable army, were slaughtered by the Duke of Guise's troops, or massacred by the peasants. Not satisfied with nearly exterminating them, the soldiery of the Duke of Lorrain exercised unprecedented cruelty on the inhabitants themselves of the territory of Montbelliard, and proceeded to the most enormous excesses of violence, rapine and bloodshed. Of near sixteen thousand Germans who had entered France, scarcely five hundred, exhausted with fatigue, and almost in a state of nakedness, reached their own abodes in safety. [s]

CHAP. VI. 1587.

Destruction of the Germans.

Henry remained meanwhile the passive spectator of a series of victories, which covered his most inveterate enemy with so much personal glory. He received, indeed, intelligence of the defeat of the Germans at Auneau, without manifesting any expressions of regret; and he accepted graciously the trophies and standards sent him by the Duke of Guise: but he was not internally less wounded by the conviction that "the League," elevated with success, would soon turn their arms against himself. The opportunity of crushing the house of Lorrain, which had presented itself, was irrecoverably lost; and it seemed difficult, if not impossible to expect that the Duke of Guise, now raised above the rank of a subject, would remain long in a state of repose. The recent events of the war, by an obvious and unavoid-

Conduct of Henry.

His embarrassments.

[s] D'Aubig. vol. iii. p. 65—68. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 323—326. De Thou, vol. x. p. 61—63. Davila, p. 661—663. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 37—42. Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 170—178.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

able comparison, had conduced to humble the crown, in the same proportion that they gave strength to its enemies; and the inhabitants of Paris, alienated more than ever from a King, whom they persisted to regard as secretly allied with the Hugonots, knew no bounds to their admiration for the deliverer and avenger of France. They even accused Epernon with favouring the escape of the foreign army, which must otherwise have been completely put to the sword; and they considered Henry as participating in the pretended crime of his favourite. Under these impressions, that prince returning from the campaign, made his public entry into the metropolis, with the decorations of a conqueror: while the Duke of Guise, repairing to Nancy, the capital of Lorrain, and summoning a counsel composed of his nearest friends, prepared to improve his late advantages, and to undertake more important enterprizes against the dignity and person of his sovereign.[t]

He returns to Paris. 23d December.

During

[t] De Thou, vol. x. p. 63—65.

That Henry the Third not only expected his own extrication from the toils which "the League" had wrapt about him, by means of the German army; but, that he even favoured the progress of those invaders, as much as he could venture to do, consistent with his own safety; are incontestable facts. There is an internal evidence of it, thro'out his whole conduct; in the reluctance with which he took the field; in the position which he chose, at a distance from the probable scene of hostilities, in the province of the Orleanois; in the coldness with which he received the intelligence of the Duke of Guise's success at Vimory, and at Auneau; lastly, in the terms of accommodation, by which he attempted, though vainly in a great measure, to save the remains of the Germans from the fury of the princes of Lorrain.

CHAP. VI.

1587.

Foreign affairs. Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

During the progress of so many internal events which exclusively occupied Henry's attention, he seemed to have lost sight of the foreign interests and concerns of the nation. Even the execution of his sister-in-law, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Dowager-queen of France, which took place early in the course of the year, had

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Lorrain. Davila asserts it, and De Thou insinuates it, thro'out their whole narration of the events of that campaign. But, if any doubt could remain upon the point, it is completely done away by the avowal of Henry himself, in the clearest and most unequivocal terms, contained in the curious and important dispatch of the English embassador at Paris, Sir Edward Stafford, to Queen Elizabeth, dated "the 25th February, 1588;" two months after the King's return to the capital. The letter is to be found in the "Hardwick State Papers," vol. i. page 251 to 264. In a secret interview with the English minister, managed with the utmost caution, and during the whole course of which conference there was no third person present, Henry unveiled his lamentable condition; besought Elizabeth's friendly aid to extricate him; and particularly entreated her to exhort the King of Navarre to embrace the Catholic religion, as the only means to disarm and dissolve "the League." He clearly confessed to Stafford, that he had hoped for the destruction of the family of Lorrain, from the invasion of the Germans; that in the expectation of this result, and from no other motive, he had declined and refused Elizabeth's repeated offers, to stop the entrance of the foreign army; and that he purposely took his own station at a distance from them, and avoided to the last moment, any attack upon their forces, till it became impossible for him longer to adhere to such a line of conduct. He, bitterly, and with expressions of indignation, reprobated their cowardice or incapacity, in not demolishing the feeble army, commanded by the Dukes of Guise and Mayenne; or at least, in not ravaging and desolating, as they might have done, the estates and territories of all the adherents of "the League;" who must in such case have had recourse to his interposition, to rescue them from total ruin. He claimed notwithstanding, the merit of having saved those of the Germans who escaped, by the treaty which the Duke of Epernon concluded, for their safe return into their own country. No state paper, published in the present century, merits more attention, or lays open so much of the private feelings of Henry with respect to the Duke of Guise, as this dispatch from Stafford to Elizabeth.

CHAP. VI. 1587.

been swallowed up in his own immediate embarrassments. The intimate connexion of religion, consanguinity, and friendship subsisting between that unfortunate princess, and the family of Guise, from which she descended on her mother's side; necessarily diminished, if it did not totally extinguish, the interest which he might otherwise have felt in her misfortunes: and it was doubted whether the intercession made in her behalf by Bellievre, the French embassador at London, originated in real affection and sympathy, or was only a well acted piece of state dissimulation. It is certain that the remonstrance neither mollified Elizabeth, nor protracted the destiny of the Scottish Queen. In the affairs of the Dutch Netherlands, which, Leicester, the English commander, had embroiled, while at the same time he greatly injured the reputation of the United States; the King of France, in contradiction to every principle of policy, and even to the dictates of self-preservation, took no part. He appeared to view with the same indifference, the vast preparations making in the ports of Spain and Portugal, where Philip the Second had long been occupied in fitting out his invincible Armada, designed for the conquest of England.

CHAP. VII.

State of France after the defeat of the Germans. — Proceedings of the princes of Lorrain. — Death of the Prince of Condé. — Conspiracies against Henry. — Arrival of the Duke of Guise at Paris. — Insurrection. — Flight of the King. — Negotiations. — Treaty between Henry and the Duke of Guise. — Convocation of the States-general of France at Blois. — Henry determines to assassinate the Duke of Guise. — Measures adopted for its execution. — Assassination of the Duke and the Cardinal of Guise.

1588.

State of France.

SUCH was the critical situation to which the affairs of France were now reduced, that it became evident, some great convulsion must speedily follow the late events. The invasion of the Germans, which if it had been conducted with vigor and capacity, must have driven the family of Guise to implore the protection of Henry; had, in consequence of the errors and misfortunes of the expedition, thrown a prodigious weight into the opposite scale. Instead of advancing to form a junction with them, as had been concerted, the King of Navarre, terrified at the intelligence of their repeated defeats, and expecting the united forces of the crown and of "the League," to overwhelm him; retired for protection, notwithstanding his recent victory at Coutras, over Joyeuse, to the

CHAP. VII.

1588. and of Henry.

city of Rochelle, the asylum and bulwark of the Hugonots. Henry, who had only acted a negative part in the operations of the late campaign, and who had derived from it neither security nor reputation, returned to a capital where his person and his dignity were equally exposed to perpetual insult. The populace, more than ever intoxicated with admiration of the Duke of Guise, to whose valor and military skill, the expulsion of the foreign army from the French territory was exclusively due, felt an augmented alienation and contempt for their sovereign. All the treasonable machinations and conspiracies, which had been in some measure suspended, while the event of the recent transactions remained uncertain, were renewed without apprehension of punishment. The King, agitated with continual fears, distrustful of his ministers, doubtful of the adherence or sincerity even of his own mother, who indirectly favoured the house of Lorrain, and no longer able to fix on any system which promised him a probable, or speedy extrication from his embarrassments; remained unaccountably inactive and supine, at a moment which demanded the utmost energy and decision.

Decisive measures of the Duke of Guise.

On the other hand, Guise, conscious of his present advantages, prompt to improve them, and inclined from his character to embrace the most adventurous or daring expedients for the completion of all his projects, proceeded instantly to avail himself of his augmented national consideration. In an assembly composed

of

of the members of his family, it was determined, notwithstanding the reluctance manifested by some of them, who were inclined to more cautious or moderate counsels; that an attack should be immediately made on the capital and territories of the Duke of Bouillon. That Prince was lately deceased at Geneva, without leaving male issue; and as his contracted dominions devolved to his sister, whose youth and sex disqualified her for making any vigorous defence, the occasion of invading them, appeared too favourable to be neglected. They resolved at the same time, to present a new petition to Henry, in the name and on behalf of "the League," by which he was entreated to unite himself in closer tyes, with a confederacy formed for his destruction. The articles contained various requisitions, all calculated to degrade the throne, and to elevate on its ruins, the house of Guise. They demanded the establishment of the holy office of the inquisition; the extirpation of heresy; the cession of new places of security, and the confirmation of those towns or fortresses already held by the adherents of "the League;" together with the formation of an army, to be maintained and paid by the King, in order to prevent the return of the Germans into France. Insolent and exorbitant as these propositions appeared, they were not rejected by Henry; who fearful of refusing his assent to them, only sought by evasion and delays, to elude their accomplishment:

CHAP. VII.

1588. January.

Petition, presented to Henry, by "the League."

He eludes it.

CHAP. VII. 1588.

ment: while the emissaries of the Guises, scattered over the metropolis, already began to reduce into order, the tumultuous and discordant parts of which the faction was composed, and to prepare matters for the final catastrophé.[a]

Death of the Prince of Condé. 5th March.

The affairs of the Hugonots, involved in distress by the defeat of the Germans, were rendered still more gloomy at this period, by the unexpected loss of one of their principal chiefs and supports. Henry, Prince of Condé, after having successfully encountered every danger in the field, was carried off by a death no less sudden than tragical. Incontestable symptoms of poison appeared during the progress of his disease, as well as subsequent to his dissolution. Suspicions, apparently too well authenticated, fell upon the Princess his wife, who was seized and imprisoned by order of the magistrates of the town of St. John d'Angely in Saintonge, the scene of the whole transaction. Her state of pregnancy, and the birth of a son, whom she brought into the world six months subsequent to her husband's decease; rather than any proofs of her innocence which were produced, preserved her from a more severe enquiry and punishment. She was, notwithstanding, detained in confinement above six years. Brillaud, one of the Prince's domestics, convicted of having been accessary to his death, was torn in pieces by wild horses. Almost all the qualities

Suspicions of poison.

His character.

[a] De Thou, vol. x. p. 236—238. Davila, p. 669.

which

which can combine to form an exalted, rather than an amiable character, met in the Prince of Condé. Exempt from the irregularities and gallantries of his cousin, the King of Navarre, Condé equalled him in valor, humanity, affability, prudence, and liberality. Unfortunate in all his military enterprizes, banished to an obscure place in a distant province beyond the Loire, ejected from his government of Picardy, neglected by his sovereign, persecuted by the Catholics, driven during the fury of civil war, in which scene he had been nourished from his infancy, to the severest extremities of poverty, exile, and hardship; his fortitude raised him above so many misfortunes, but could not surmount his evil destiny. He expired in the vigor of his age, at thirty-five years; and the intelligence of his melancholy fate excited various, as well as contradictory emotions. The King of Navarre, who bewailed his loss, undertook to avenge it, by a rigorous prosecution of his murderers. Henry, occupied in celebrating the funeral of his late favourite, Joyeuse, and surrounded on every side with dangers that menaced his own safety, scarcely appeared sensible to so affecting an event. The Parisians, by whom the Prince was detested, on account of his zealous adherence to the reformed religion, made public rejoicings to commemorate his death: while the Duke of Guise, mindful of the uncertainty of human affairs, and who knew how to esteem the virtues even of an

1588.

Different emotions, excited by his death.

CHAP. VII. 1588.

an enemy, shed tears on receiving the information, and gave proofs of the most unfeigned concern. [b]

[b] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 330 and 331. De Thou, vol. x. p. 242—247. Letters of Henry the Fourth, in Voltaire, vol. x. p. 232—235. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. i. p. 408. Mem. p. ser. a l'His. de France, p. 243, 244. D'Aub. His. Univ. v. iii. p. 72.

The Prince of Condé's death is not to be ranked among those problematical, and uncertain accounts of poison, with which every history abounds, and which may frequently be attributed to malignity or credulity. By the unanimous, and undisputed testimony of all the contemporary writers, the Prince died of poison: but it is more difficult to determine, on whom principally falls the guilt of so atrocious a crime. Brillaud, who was executed, shewed marks of insanity; and his deposition, as De Thou asserts, was obscure or defective in many particulars. Belcastel, page of the Princess of Condé, and a valet de chambre, were accused of having administered the potion, which caused his death. They fled, and the former escaped out of France; but the valet was seized at Poitiers, and brought to St. John d'Angely. It was pretended that the page had been criminally intimate with the Princess; and that she was pregnant by him, at the time of her husband's death. The King of Navarre, who repaired immediately in person to St. John d'Angely, and who must have known every circumstance which could elucidate the transaction, expressly accuses the Princess of being privy to, and an accomplice in the Prince's death. His letters on the subject are still in existence. De Thou, who wrote under the reign of Henry the Fourth, at a period of time when the Princess was declared to be absolved from the imputation, speaks guardedly respecting her; but his opinion of her guilt, is evidently to be perceived. Mezerai positively asserts it, at a greater distance of time. In 1596, about eight years after her husband's death, she was liberated by order of Henry the Fourth, and all the proceedings against her were burnt, as having been informal, and contrary to the privileges of her rank. But L'Etoile, in his "Journal d'Henry trois," a contemporary work, makes no scruple of naming the Princess, as the person at whose instigation Belcastel poisoned the Prince. Her pregnancy, and her having been delivered of a male child, probably conduced to the favourable termination of the judicial prosecution instituted against her. She did not bring that son into the world, till the 1st September, 1588, near six calendar months subsequent to her husband's decease. He afterwards became Prince of Condé, by the name of Henry the Second, and was father to the great Condé, so celebrated in the history of France, under Louis the Fourteenth.

These

1588.

These generous, but transitory sensations of commiseration or sympathy, were speedily obliterated by the great and hazardous experiment which he was at length about to make in his own person, on the success of which depended his glory, his fortune, and his life. Having dispatched a number of able and experienced officers to Paris, who might form the necessary dispositions previous to his immediate appearance; and having stationed five hundred cavalry under the command of the Duke of Aumale, in the neighbouring towns; he advanced to Gonesse, a village in the vicinity of the capital, with intention to enter the suburbs. But, information being brought him, that the King had caused a body of four thousand Switzers to approach the metropolis; the Duke, terrified at this measure, and apprehensive of being arrested, returned to Soissons. His adherents, nevertheless, continued their plots against Henry's person; and although constantly discovered, yet, as no exertion was made to seize and bring them to punishment, their audacity continually encreased by impunity. At the head of the most inveterate enemies of the King, might be accounted the Duchess of Montpensier, sister to the Duke of Guise, married to a collateral prince of the royal blood. Irritated by some sarcastic and humiliating disclosures which Henry had made of her personal defects, she determined on revenge, and her implacable spirit animated the Parisians to the most desperate enterprizes. It

Designs and irresolution of the Duke of Guise. April.

Projects of the Duchess of Montpensier.

was

CHAP. VII.

1588. 22d April.

was finally resolved to attack the Louvre by force, to cut in pieces the guards, and to imprison the King. When this plan became impracticable, in consequence of the precautions which had been taken upon Poulain's former deposition; a new project was set on foot, to seize him on his return from the castle of Vincennes, at which time he was usually accompanied only by a few of his guards. Henry received intimation of the design; and having sent to Paris for an escort of cavalry, was by them conducted in safety through the city.

Alarm of the malcontents.

Driven to despair by so many unsuccessful attempts, expecting hourly that vengeance would overtake them, and unable longer to retain his numerous adherents who clamorously demanded to be employed; the chiefs of the enterprize sent a messenger to the Duke of Guise, imploring him as he valued the safety of all those individuals who had embarked with him in the same common cause, not to delay his instant return to the capital. [c]

Henry prohibits the Duke of Guise from coming to Paris.

This event had long been foreseen by the King, as equally probable, and alarming in its consequences. With a view to prevent it, he condescended to an act unbecoming the majesty of the throne, by dispatching Belliévre, one of his ministers, to Soissons, where the Duke then resided, together with the Cardinal of Bourbon, and his principal adherents. Belliévre's message seemed rather to deprecate,

[c] Davila, p. 669—675 and 678. De Thou, vol. x. p. 247—251.

than to prohibit his arrival; and Henry adopted the language of supplication, instead of using the requisition of authority. Far from yielding obedience to the royal injunction, the Duke in turn had recourse to complaints and to excuses; leaving it uncertain whether he would obey, or whether it was his intention to disregard the order. New messengers were therefore sent to him from court, to reiterate the prohibition. But Guise, who had already embraced the final determination of appearing in person, either to extricate, or to perish with his friends in the metropolis, contrived to elude the orders, by taking another road. Entering Paris with only seven attendants, he alighted at the residence of the Queen-mother; who, amazed, and almost overcome by so unexpected a visit, betrayed her concern, notwithstanding the expressions of satisfaction with which she endeavoured to conceal her emotions. She instantly informed the King of his arrival, signifying at the same time her intention of bringing the Duke to pay his respects to Henry at the Louvre.

CHAP. VII. 1588.

9th May. His arrival.

That infatuated Prince, who had always deceived himself by an opinion that Guise would not presume, in contradiction to so many expressions of his pleasure, to insult him in his own palace, was unable to resolve on the manner of the Duke's reception and treatment. In a hasty and disorderly consultation, held during the short interval which elapsed between the intelligence of his intended approach, and his

Indecision of the King.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

his actual appearance, various propositions were debated among the ministers. It was even agitated, to put him to death in the closet where Henry meant to give him audience, and the King did not appear to be averse from so violent an expedient: but the more timid, or the more prudent part of his council, induced him to reject the advice. Meanwhile Guise, conducted by Catherine of Medicis, and followed by an immense crowd who pressed to give him marks of their attachment or devotion, proceeded on foot towards the Louvre. As he passed along, the inhabitants of the metropolis, peculiarly the female part of the population, loaded him with benedictions, and expressed the most unbounded veneration or affection for his person. The affability and popularity of his deportment confirmed his empire over the people, and rendered them capable of making every sacrifice or exertion, to secure his safety. He was notwithstanding appalled at his entrance into the court of the Louvre, when he found himself enclosed between the Switzers of the royal guard, the archers, and other soldiers, drawn up with Grillon at their head, one of the most intrepid individuals of that period, who received him in deep silence.

Reception of Guise by the Parisians.

His visit to Henry.

Henry's reception of the Duke was cold and even angry; nor did he seem to be either mollified or convinced by the excuses which were offered to justify so daring a measure. Guise, apprehensive of being detained, conscious that he was in the power of a sovereign whom he had

had insulted and incensed, surrounded by enemies, and aware that every moment of his stay might endanger his retreat; shortened the interview by pretending fatigue, and withdrew unmolested, from the royal presence[d]. The two succeeding days were passed in continual negotiations, which only proved their mutual distrust. A long conversation afterwards took place at the Queen-mother's palace, between the King and the Duke; where the latter, no longer restrained by the prudential considerations which had influenced his conduct while in the Louvre, manifested his pretensions without disguise. They were so extensive and insolent, that, disposed as the King was to make numerous sacrifices in order to obtain peace, he rejected them, and prepared for his defence. But, after having allowed his enemies to gain possession of the capital, to inflame the minds of the people, and to make provision of arms, leaders, and every requisite for commencing active war, it was not easy to reduce them again within the limits of submission. Warned by the same vigilant and faithful spy who had so often given him information, that nocturnal meetings were held at the Duke of Guise's house, where the conspirators were deliberating to proceed to the last extremities of violence and rebellion; he issued orders to introduce four thousand Switzers, under the command of Biron, and a consider-

CHAP. VII. 1588.

Demands of Guise.

Henry introduces the Swiss troops into Paris.

[d] Davila, p. 679—683. De Thou, vol. x. p. 253—255.

CHAP. VII.

1588. 12th May.

able number of his guards, who had been previously quartered in the villages near Paris. They entered early in the morning, were met by Henry in person at the gates, and marched to occupy the principal squares or places in the metropolis, without opposition.

His resolute conduct.

Such was the consternation occasioned by the arrival and entrance of the royal forces, and so unprepared were the inhabitants for effectual resistance, that if vigorous measures had been pursued, before the first impressions of terror had subsided, the King might have disarmed, or rendered himself master of the city. But, the same pusillanimous and timid policy, which had enabled "the League" to continue their operations for many successive years against the crown, rendered ineffectual the only effort exerted for its preservation. The exhortations of Catherine of Medicis, who was inclined to favour the Guises, and anxious to prevent a rupture; strengthened by the advice of Villequier, governor of Paris; induced Henry to issue peremptory orders to the commanders of the troops recently stationed, enjoining them to use no violence, but to remain entirely on the defensive. Encouraged by the tame and passive behaviour of the soldiery, and passing rapidly from the extreme of fear, to that of insolence; the people, after some hours, began to assemble tumultuously in large bodies. Conducted and directed by the officers whom the Duke of Guise had purposely scattered among them, while he himself affected to remain quiet within his house, the populace drove the

Insurrection of the Parisians.

the Switzers and guards from all their posts. At the same time advancing, as the others retired, they placed Barricadoes at the end of every street, stretched chains across, and secured their acquisition. [e]

They barricade the streets.

On the first intelligence received at court, that the citizens having shut up their shops, and rung the alarm bells, had collected, with intent to oppose the troops, Henry sent directions to Grillon to occupy certain places, calculated to give him possession of the quarter in which the Duke of Guise resided; and from whence an insurrection was most to be apprehended. But the order arrived too late: the royal forces, restrained from resistance by the prohibition issued to fire upon the inhabitants, were already surrounded, and equally incapable of moving forwards, or of effecting their retreat: while the Barricadoes advancing regularly, were pushed within a few paces of the Louvre, in the face of the body guard. Content with obliging the native French troops to extinguish their matches, and to ground their arms, the populace spared their persons. But the Switzers, more obnoxious, as foreigners and mercenaries, being assaulted, were plundered; and near forty of them were put to the sword.

Dangerous and humiliating situation of the King.

During so disgraceful a proceeding, the King, invested in the palace of the Louvre, the gate of which was defended by about five hundred gentlemen and soldiers; besieged by his own subjects; expecting every moment to be at-

[e] Davila, p. 684—690. De Thou, vol. x. p. 256—260.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

tacked, and afraid of exposing his person to the insults of a furious and exasperated mob; remained in a situation equally perilous and ignominious. The Marshals Biron and d'Aumont having ventured to harangue the people, and to persuade them to disperse, were saluted with several musket balls; and the King, incapable of long resistance, might be considered as at the mercy of the insurgents. In every part of this memorable convulsion, we are involuntarily led to contemplate the striking similarity between the 12th of May, 1588, and the 10th of August, 1792. The sovereign, on both occasions, was besieged in his palace. But Henry the Third, passive and yielding as he was, yet could exert some energy of character, when impelled by necessity. Louis the Sixteenth, more tame or inert, suffered himself without an effort, to be conducted with his Queen and children, from the Tuilleries to the *Temple*, and to the Guillotine.

Conduct of the Duke of Guise.

No triumph could be more complete on the part of the Duke of Guise; who, if he had profited of the ardor of the Parisians, might, either by force or by negotiation, have instantly seized on the person of Henry himself. But, unprepared or unwilling to proceed to the last extremity against his sovereign, he preferred a different mode of action. Quitting his house, in which he had hitherto chosen to remain, as a passive spectator of the commotion, he appeared in the streets on horseback, unarmed, with only a truncheon in his hand. His voice and presence instantly suspended the tumult. Satisfied with

with having excited the rage of the Parisians, and directed it against the King, he checked and controuled its further progress. As he proceeded through the different quarters of the city, he caused the royal troops, who were every where disarmed, to be set at liberty, and conducted in safety back to the Louvre, bare-headed, their arms trailed along the ground. But, attentive, while he gave this proof of his unlimited ascendant over the people, to secure the great object of his exertions; he commanded the Barricadoes to be maintained, and the most vigilant watch to be observed, in order to prevent the King's escape.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

He pacifies the populace.

Under these distressful circumstances, that prince had recourse to his usual expedient of negotiation. Catherine of Medicis, continuing to mediate, visited the Duke of Guise, and endeavoured to accommodate matters between them. The populace, masters of the capital, would not even permit her to pass through the intermediate streets, in her coach; and she was reduced to the humiliating necessity of being carried in a chair, while the Barricadoes, which opened to admit her passage, were immediately closed behind her. Nor did she find in Guise any disposition to treat, except upon conditions too insolent to be accepted even by Henry in his present abject state. No alternative therefore except flight, was left him; which might speedily become impracticable, if the Louvre, pressed in front, and destitute of provisions to hold out against the besiegers, should be in-

Negotiations of the Queen-dowager, with Guise.

CHAP. VII.

1588. Terror of Henry.

vested from behind, towards the open country. After a night of irresolution and alarm, the King determined on quitting his palace, in order to effect his escape: while the Queen-mother returning a second time to the Duke of Guise, attempted to prevail on him to mollify the terms demanded by him on the preceding day. Henry's departure was accelerated by the intelligence which he received, that measures were taken for surrounding him; and that eight thousand men were already on their march to cut off his retreat, while an attack was to be made at the same time upon the palace by the Parisians.

13th May. His flight from Paris.

Terrified at the prospect of remaining a prisoner in the hands of his revolted subjects, he quitted the Louvre; and having mounted on horseback, attended only by a few gentlemen, he took the road to Chartres, where he arrived on the following day. His courtiers, many of the principal magistrates, and the great officers of the crown, followed him in the utmost confusion. [f]

Such

[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 260—267. Davila, p. 691—698. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 46—49. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 102—108. L'Etoile, Jour. p. 244—246. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 332—336. D'Aubig. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 72—77.

Of all the contemporary historians who have related the circumstances attending the Duke of Guise's arrival at Paris, the day of the Barricadoes, and the flight of Henry, Davila is the most minute, most interesting, and perhaps the most accurate in his narration. He recounts it from high authority, and with a perfect knowledge of the facts. De Thou, contains likewise a number of very curious particulars. That great and virtuous magistrate was on the spot, an actor in the business, and a spectator of the scene. But, Davila, seems to have known more of the secret springs or motives which actuated Henry's conduct.

Chiverny,

Such was the singular destiny of Henry the Third. Elevated to the throne of Poland by election, and to the crown of France by descent; yet, compelled to fly from the capital of each kingdom with precipitation, and to quit Paris, as he had done Cracow, near fourteen years earlier, under circumstances of disgrace, of humiliation, or of ignominy. His departure was not less unpleasing to the Duke of Guise, who received the information, while he was still occupied in negotiating with the Queen-mother. Conscious that he had by his want of vigilance or foresight, allowed his prey to escape, and aware of all the sinister consequences which must ensue from so irreparable a fault, he at first exhibited marks of surprize, and even of consternation. But, recovering from his first emotions, he prepared to avail himself of his victory over the crown. Paris remained completely in his possession, and he lost not a moment in securing so valuable a prize. Having

CHAP. VII. 1588.

Emotions of Guise on that event.

Chiverny, who, from his high post of Chancellor, must have been acquainted with every transaction respecting it, is short, and destitute of any valuable matter. He asserts that when the King left Paris, his intention was only to have gone to St. Germain; but, reflecting that he would not be more in safety there, than in the capital itself, he resolved on retiring to Chartres. It appears from L'Etoile, that he had not a moment to lose; and that if he had delayed his flight for two hours longer, it would have become impracticable. We find by the "Chronologie Novennaire," that some soldiers, placed in the tower of Nesle, on the bank of the Seine, near the gate by which the King escaped, fired on him, and loaded him with the most abusive language. He slept in his boots, on that night, at the royal castle of Rambouillet, after having stationed guards on every side, to prevent surprize or attack.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

caused the Barricadoes to be removed, and restored universal tranquillity throughout the city, he summoned the governor of the Bastile to surrender that fortress. Henry had injudiciously refused to entrust the defence of it to Ornano, a Corsican, one of his bravest and most faithful officers, who had offered, on pain of losing his head, to maintain it till the last extremity. The Bastile was immediately delivered up to the insurgents; and here again we trace the same improvidence between Henry and Louis. Two days afterwards, the castle of Vincennes followed the example. New municipal magistrates were elected in the place of those attached to the King: Guise took possession of the arsenal; subjected almost all the places commanding the course of the rivers Seine and Marne, on which the metropolis principally depended for supplies of provisions; and omitted no precaution to ensure the safety, while he confirmed the attachment of the Parisians. [g]

He becomes master of the Bastile.

Dissolution of the royal authority.

From the period of Henry's flight, the royal power may be said to have ceased thro'out France, and to have been in a great measure transferred to "the League." Driven from his capital, abandoned and betrayed by his ministers, who perceived his incurable supineness or incapacity; divested of the sovereign authority, and greatly diminished even in the external splendor annexed to the throne; compelled not only to gratify his implacable enemies with

[g] De Thou, vol. x. p. 268—270. Davila, p. 699 and 700.

every

every dignity and office, but to complete his own humiliation, by approving all their outrages; he continued merely to retain the title, without exercising the functions of a king. While Guise, elated with his success, addressed letters to the various cities of the kingdom, and to Henry himself, justifying the late transactions, and applauding their motives for taking up arms against him; that feeble Prince scarcely ventured, in his Manifesto to the nation, to express his resentment for the injuries which he had sustained. Instead of assembling forces, and attempting to vindicate the insulted honour of his crown, he permitted Catherine of Medicis, who remained at Paris, to continue the negotiations for peace with his revolted subject. Insensible to the degraded situation in which he stood, he even prosecuted his accustomed pleasures, at a time that the adherents of his adversary rendered themselves masters of the most important fortresses of France. Epernon, who had been absent during the late insurrection, returning from his government of Normandy, met with a cold reception, and was ordered by Henry to retire to the city of Angouleme. This step, whether only the result of dissimulation, or arising from a change of disposition towards his favourite, was followed by a treaty with Guise. The confirmation of all the various acts of rebellion and usurpation, committed by himself and his followers; the addition of new cities of security, in addition to those already ceded to "the League;" the post of commander in chief of the forces, with un-

CHAP. VII. 1588.

Feeble measures of Henry.

Treaty concluded with Guise.

CHAP. VII.

1588. unlimited powers, conferred on the Duke himself, besides the post of lord steward of the household, which he previously enjoyed; the recommencement of war with the Hugonots; the exclusion of heretics from the succession to the crown; and the convocation of the states general in the ensuing month of October, in order to ratify all the preceding concessions in the name of the nation; — these constituted the principal articles of the agreement accepted by the King. [h]

21st July.

4th August. Guise visits Henry at Chartres.

So humiliating an accommodation was followed by the arrival of Guise in person at Chartres, where Catherine of Medicis presented him to her son. Henry, notwithstanding all the recent insults received from him, exhibited every mark of forgiveness, and even demonstrations of affection, towards a man whom he justly feared, and on whose destruction, it is probable that he had already determined. The stipulations of the late treaty having been fulfilled, though not without manifest repugnance on the part of the sovereign, the Duke was invested with his new commission as commander in chief, conceived in the most ample terms. In order personally to gratify the Cardinal of Bourbon, that prelate was declared by a separate edict, to be the first prince of the royal blood; and as such, to be entitled to all the privileges or exemptions usually accorded to

[h] De Thou, vol. x. p. 323—326. Davila, p. 700—713. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 725—729.

the person possessing that eminent rank. During the course of these interesting events, the kingdom was far from enjoying internal tranquillity. In Poitou, the King of Navarre, who by the death of his cousin, the Prince of Condé, was compelled to assume the command of the Hugonot troops in that quarter; retook the important post of Marans, which had fallen into the hands of the royalists: while Lesdiguieres, already master of Dauphiné, having joined his forces with La Valette, brother to Epernon, who acted as lieutenant for the crown in Provence, became by the junction, superior to the troops of "the League." Epernon himself meanwhile, besieged in the castle of Angouleme by the inhabitants of that city, was reduced to the last extremity of famine; having only extricated himself from the danger, by the most determined courage, perseverance, and resources of mind.[1]

CHAP. VII.

1588. Commotions, and military operations in the provinces.

July.

13th August.

10th August.

But, all inferior interests or concerns became swallowed up in the consideration of the important transactions which were about to commence at Blois. The Duke of Guise, notwithstanding his past success, regarded the concessions made by the King, as equally incomplete and insecure, till they were solemnly ratified by the assembly of the States of France; and he exerted, in person, as well as by his emissaries, every endeavour to procure the

Projects of Guise,

[1] De Thou, vol. x. p. 328—343, and 352—367. Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 230—273.

election

CHAP. VII.

1588. and of Henry.

election of delegates favourable to his ambitious projects. Henry, on the other hand, had conceived the vain and chimerical hope of resuming or regaining in that assembly, his antient authority. Having gratified the chiefs of "the League" by a compliance with all their demands, and by the pardon of their conduct in the recent insurrection of Paris; he weakly flattered himself that they would rest satisfied with their acquisitions. Rendered however distrustful by his experience of the infidelity of his ministers, whom he suspected of being either wholly devoted to the Queen-mother, under whose protection they had risen to power; or of being secretly attached to the party of the Guises; he made a complete change in the members of his cabinet. A new administration was formed, on whose adherence he believed that he could confide; and Chiverny, the Chancellor, being dismissed from his employment, was succeeded by Montholon, to whom the seals were delivered.

Change of ministers.

Convocation of the States General, at Blois. 10th October.

The convocation of the States General, impatiently expected by both parties, was opened by the King in person; who having harangued the three orders, met in the hall of the castle of Blois, exposed to them in animated colors, the calamities of the nation, and besought of them to co-operate with him in applying instant and adequate remedies. In order at the same time to give an incontestable proof of his sincerity in the late treaty with the Duke of Guise, and of his intention to execute it with scru-

scrupulous fidelity, he swore to its observance; caused the edict to be received as a fundamental law of the state, and the oath of conformity to it to be taken by every member of the assembly. He nevertheless soon perceived, that instead of acquiring force or popularity by such a measure, he had only degraded the throne, while he augmented the confidence of his enemies. All the deliberations of the States, which were directed by them, served to convince him that his expectations of obtaining assistance from the representatives of the nation, would prove altogether delusive. The clergy, universally devoted to Guise, and peculiarly interested in the continuance of war with the Hugonots, considered him as their sole protector: while the delegates composing the third estate, among whom, loyalty, public spirit, and patriotism might have been expected; oppressed by the severity of taxes, or corrupted by the money lavishly expended to purchase their suffrages, received the Duke's commands with implicit obedience. Among the class of nobles alone, Henry maintained a considerable degree of influence: but the crown was found too weak to support a contest with the other orders, or to render abortive the schemes of the powerful faction which preponderated in every resolution.[k]

CHAP. VII. 1558.

Influence of Guise in the assembly.

Political reasons, as well as personal motives, combined in urging the King to adopt some

November.

[k] Davila, p. 719—726. De Thou, vol. x. p. 368—397.

vigo-

CHAP. VII.

1588.

vigorous measure for his safety and extrication. The Duke of Savoy, Charles Emanuel, a prince of an aspiring mind and ambitious views, encouraged by the troubles of France, privately connected with the Guises, and availing himself of so favourable an occasion, had attacked and conquered the Marquisate of Saluzzo; a small isolated teritory, situated among the mountains of the Alps, constituting the last remains of the once extensive French acquisitions in Piedmont. Henry appeared deeply sensible to the injury, which on his part was unmerited; and such was the indignation manifested by the States, that they proceeded instantly to declare war upon a prince, who had wantonly violated without provocation, a long established peace. The three orders, instigated by the Duke of Guise, had moreover unanimously and clamorously demanded the royal assent to a resolution, excluding the King of Navarre from his right of succession: and though Henry had been able to delay an immediate compliance with their request, yet it was evident that he must eventually sanction the decree. From every quarter he received information of the Duke's treasonable designs, which had for their avowed object, the seizure of his person, his imprisonment, and consequent deposition. Marshal d'Aumont, one of the few persons sincerely attached to his honor and interests, had warned him that not a moment was to be lost, as the States were already disposed to insist on the nomination of the Duke, to the office of

Capture of Saluzzo, by the Duke of Savoy.

Demands of the States.

of Constable of France; the powers annexed to which high employment, would render him equally independent of, and formidable to, the crown. CHAP. VII. 1588.

As if these public inducements were not considered sufficiently powerful to propel the habitual indolence of the King, private insults and mortifications the most humiliating, were added by the Guises. Henry having desired to except the city of Orleans, from the number of places ceded by him to "the League," his wish was not only refused, but menaces were thrown out, if he should presume to insist on the proposition. The Duchess of Montpensier, his implacable adversary, publicly exhibited the golden scissars which she wore at her girdle; destined, as she did not hesitate declaring, to give the monastic tonsure to a King, whom she pronounced unworthy longer to wear the crown. Even from the adherents themselves of the family of Guise, and as it was generally believed, from the Duke of Mayenne himself, whose moderate temper rendered him averse to his brother's ambitious views; Henry had received advice, that a desperate measure was on the point of being taken against his dignity and liberty, if not against his life.[1] Motives to impel the King to adopt vigorous resolutions.

Roused from his habitual apathy by so many concurring testimonies, that irresolute prince, driven beyond the bounds of patience, and Henry determines on causing Guise to be put to death.

[1] Davila, p. 726—739. De Thou, vol. x. p. 422—449. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 95—103.

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CHAP. VII. 1588.

compelled to have recourse to the most violent remedies, in order to preserve the remains of his authority, at length determined on immediate vengeance. Unable to arrest so powerful a criminal, surrounded by his numerous followers, or to condemn him by the customary forms of justice, he was necessitated to recur to assassination; and having once embraced the resolution, it was not difficult to find instruments for the purpose. His terrors of "the League," had induced him to form a body guard, composed principally of Gascon gentlemen, selected by Epernon; men destitute of fortune, faithful, and capable of executing any enterprize. They were forty-five in number, commanded by Lognac, whose devotion to his prince was unquestionable. Having chosen from among them nine, of whose intrepidity he entertained the highest opinion, Henry distributed the poniards destined for the act, with his own hands; stationed them in the apartment adjoining to his cabinet; and recommended to them the preservation of his honor, and his crown.

He selects the instrument of his vengeance.

Audacity of Guise.

Notwithstanding the precautions taken to conceal the design, indirect and ambiguous notifications of it were transmitted to the Duke of Guise, from various quarters. But, naturally unsusceptible of fear, and audacious even to temerity; too far advanced, either to retreat, or to fly, without sacrificing his projects and his adherents; relying on the timidity or indecision of Henry, whom he despised; and dissuaded

suaded by the Archbishop of Lyons, one of his most confidential friends, from abandoning his plans at the very moment of their completion, he disregarded all admonitions. The King having commanded his attendance, alone, with a view, as was pretended, to consult him on some affairs of a private nature; the Duke, unaccompanied by his ordinary attendants, quitted the chamber in which the council was assembled, in order to obey the injunction. At the instant when he entered the adjoining apartment, while he was in the act of lifting up the tapestry which covered the door of the cabinet where Henry stood; the gentlemen stationed to assassinate him, attacked him on every side. Overpowed by numbers, like Cæsar in the Senate house, and incapable of making a long defence, he soon fell, measured his length on the ground, and expired almost without uttering a single articulate expression. [m]

CHAP. VII. 1588.

His assassination. 23d December.

Such

[m] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 103—109. L'Etoile. p. 257—259. De Thou, vol. x. p. 460—470, and p. 480. Davila, p. 741—747. Chiverny, vol. i. p. 121—123.

Every particular of this interesting Catastrophé is to be found in Davila, L'Etoile, De Thou, and the "Chronologie Novennaire." They in general agree with each other, in the leading facts. It cannot be questioned, that the Duke of Guise received repeated information of Henry's intention to assassinate him; nor does it seem that he altogether disbelieved or despised the admonition: but he could no longer retreat without disgrace and ruin. L'Etoile asserts, that he received no less than nine billets on the morning of his death, to warn him of his impending fate; and that he disregarded them all. He adds, that after the Duke's assassination, Henry advancing out of his closet, and regarding the dead body of his enemy, kicked it on the face; exclaiming, "Mon Dieu! qu'il est grand! Il paroit en-"core plus grand, mort, que vivant." But these were only vulgar

CHAP. VII.

1588. Character.

Such was the fatal termination of a man, who in other times, and conducted by other principles, might have approved himself equally the support of the throne, and the ornament of his country. Nature had lavished on him many of the rarest and greatest endowments; peculiarly those which are calculated to obtain, and to preserve, an empire over mankind. In generosity, affability, and insinuation of manners, he exceeded any of his contemporaries. His address was popular and gracious, yet dignified and elevated. Profuse of promises, of caresses, and of money, he acquired adherents in every class of society. His talents for war had been

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reports. Davila, far better informed, expressly says, that "the King, "content with knowing that the Duke was dead, would not even "look upon the corpse:" and De Thou confirms it by declaring, that, "so soon as Guise's death was announced, Henry ordered the "carpet upon which he fell, to be laid over him, and came out of "his closet." This conduct is much more analogous to the general character of the King, who was not cruel nor vindictive. The last necessity alone had impelled him to anticipate the intentions of his enemies, which were levelled against his crown and liberty.

If it be true, as D'Aubigné asserts, that the door which communicated from the chamber in which Guise was killed, to the King's closet, was walled up, in order to prevent the possibility of his entering it; no circumstance can convey a stronger idea of the terror with which he impressed Henry. The bodies of the Duke, and of the Cardinal his brother, were let down by ropes from the castle, on the the night of the 24th of December, into the court yard; and there consumed by quick-lime, in order to prevent any relics of them from being preserved by their adherents. The Jacobins of 1793 treated the remains of Louis the Sixteenth in a similar manner. On the seizure of Pelicart, secretary to the Duke of Guise, the papers and letters in his possession, clearly proved that a treasonable correspondence was carried on between Guise and Philip the Second, King of Spain. The sums asserted to have been remitted from Philip, during the ten years preceding 1588, to his party in France, did not fall short of two hundred thousand pounds sterling, as De Thou positively declares.

fully

fully displayed on various occasions; and his success in the late campaign against the Germans, by raising him to the pinnacle of public favor, prepared and accelerated his ruin. Patient of hunger, thirst, and every hardship, he was not less idolized by the soldiery, than beloved by the people; and his incredible activity enabled him, without effort or fatigue, to be present at, and personally to direct, every operation of the field, or of the cabinet. So many sublime qualities were unfortunately obscured by an insatiable ambition, and sullied by a disregard to his promises, added to a contempt of faith in all his transactions. With Francis, Duke of Guise, his father, he cannot support a comparison in the essential qualifications of a great statesman, or a consummate general. The defence of Poitiers against Coligni, and the expulsion of the Germans who attempted to enter France, were unquestionably brilliant atchievements: but, can enter into no competition with the defence of Metz against the Emperor Charles the Fifth, the capture of Calais from the English, and the victory of Dreux over the Hugonots; all which were due to the first Duke, and may rank with the most eminent services ever rendered by a subject to his sovereign, or his country. Nor did the ambition of the father, however vast, lead him to commit acts so unjustifiable or destructive, as were planned and nearly executed by his son, who evidently aimed at transferring the sceptre from his sovereign to himself. Both

CHAP. VII. 1588.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

acted successively the first part on the theatre of France. Both obtained the epithet of "Balafré," or "the scarred," from wounds received in war; one in the trenches before Boulogne, by a lance which entered his eye; the other, by a similar accident, at the combat of Dormans, on his cheek. Both fell by assassination in the prime of life, leaving behind them a name which will endure as long as the history of the French nation.

Arrest of the Cardinal of Guise.

At the same instant when the Duke of Guise was assassinated, his brother the Cardinal, together with the Archbishop of Lyons, were arrested in the council chamber. Henry, neither sanguinary nor implacable from natural character, was inclined to have spared the Cardinal's life: but the exhortations of those who surrounded him, the violent and implacable enmity expressed by that prelate towards his sovereign, and the menaces which even his present critical situation could not induce him to refrain from uttering; these motives prevailed on the King to give orders for his execution.

His death.

Four soldiers, to whom the charge was committed, immediately dispatched him with their halberts: he met his fate with undaunted intrepidity. There are only two events in the history of Europe, which are subsequent in point of time to the assassination of the Duke of Guise, that can justly be considered as analogous to it; nor do either of those transactions carry with them the same justification, which Henry might have set up for putting to death his

his rebellious subject. The first is the assassination of Concino Concini, Marshal d'Ancre, in 1617, at Paris, by order of Louis the Thirteenth. The last is the assassination of Walstein, Duke of Friedland, in 1634, at Egra in Bohemia, by command of the Emperor of Germany, Ferdinand the Second. But in the former instance, Concini, though he might have abused to purposes of private interest or ambition, the improvident favor of Mary of Medicis; could not be liable to the imputation of treason, or of any intentions hostile to the safety and dignity of the King his master. His murder excites abhorrence, and can admit of no palliation, except from the age of Louis, who had not completed his sixteenth year. In the case of Walstein, that general was indeed accused of meditating to place on his own head the crown of Bohemia, a kingdom belonging to Ferdinand his sovereign. The charge was not however proved, though the guilt was assumed, and punished by a summary process, under the pretence that he was too powerful, to be amenable to the ordinary modes of proceeding in cases of treason or rebellion. The death of Walstein leaves therefore a stain on the memory of Ferdinand, because neither the criminality nor the necessity were demonstrated. But, both are palpable and indisputable in the Duke of Guise, who having already virtually deposed his feeble sovereign, would have consummated his usurpation of the throne in a few days, if Henry had not anticipated his intentions. Of all the assas-

CHAP. VII. 1588.

CHAP. VII.

1588.

sinations commemorated by history, it may be pronounced the most justifiable, and it excites the least condemnation. Satisfied with having sacrificed the two brothers, Henry did not shed any other blood; and he instantly granted the life of the Archbishop of Lyons, to the entreaties of that prelate's nephew. The Duchess of Nemours, mother to the Duke and Cardinal of Guise; the young Prince of Joinville, son to the Duke; together with the Cardinal of Bourbon, who had been made so long the instrument of "the League;" and the Duke of Elbeuf, another prince of the family of Lorrain, were committed prisoners to the castle of Amboise. Many of the inferior agents or adherents of the Guises, were likewise seized: but the injudicious and ill-timed lenity of the King, soon restored them to freedom; and they abused his facility, by immediately proceeding to every act of violence against the crown. The Duke of Mayenne, who was absent at Lyons, having received intelligence of the death of his brothers, and being apprized that if he lost a moment, he would be likewise arrested; precipitately left the city, and fled to Dijon, the capital of his government of Burgundy. [n]

24th December. Imprisonment of various persons.

Escape of Mayenne.

[n] Davila, p. 747—755. De Thou, vol. x. p. 471—479. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 151—154.

CHAP. VIII.

Inactivity of the King, after the death of the Guises. — Emotions excited by that event, at Paris. — Death of Catherine of Medicis. — Rebellion. — Violent acts committed by the Parisians. — Duke of Mayenne is constituted chief of "the League." — Revolt of the principal cities of France. — Desperate situation of Henry. — Conduct of the King of Navarre. — Truce made between him and Henry. — Excommunication of the King. — Interview of Plessiz les Tours. — Attack of Tours, by Mayenne. — Operations of the war. — Vigorous exertions of the King. — He marches to Paris. — Critical position of the affairs of "the League." — Assassination of Henry. — His death. — Character. — General Reflexions.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

THE consternation, excited by the violent death of the Guises, not only in the city of Blois, but throughout the kingdom, was so great, that if Henry had availed himself of it without delay, and acted with vigor, no fatal consequences might probably have resulted from the act, either to himself, or to his subjects. Notwithstanding the contempt into which his person and authority were fallen, the spirit of loyalty and obedience had not become entirely extinct in France. The capital and the provinces were alike held in mute astonishment on receiving the intelligence, and waited in

Consternation, excited by the late events.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

expectation of the events, by which so unexpected a blow would probably be followed. Orleans, a city of the first importance, might have been saved by promptitude and dispatch, Marshal D'Aumont having found means to enter the castle, which held out for the crown, against the inhabitants of the place. In Poitou, the Duke of Nevers, who commanded a considerable army against the Protestants, could have been recalled to court without difficulty. Sancy, who had recently been sent as embassador to the Swiss Cantons, urged to the King the necessity of procuring a levy of troops from that country, and offered to conduct them in person, to his assistance: nor was it possible for the adherents of "the League," unprepared as they were, and scattered over the surface of the kingdom, to act with united energy against their sovereign, if he had put himself at the head of a formidable army, followed by a numerous nobility.

Inaction of Henry.

But, all these advantages were rendered unavailing, by the inactivity and supineness of Henry. The emotions of resentment having subsided, which had excited him to revenge the insults offered to his dignity, he relapsed into his former apathy and security. He had taken no measures for supporting the late violent act of severity; and he flattered himself, that the projects of the Duke of Guise would be at once extinguished by his death. Instead of mounting instantly on horseback, and marching his forces against Orleans and Paris, he appeared

peared to be insensible to the situation of those cities; and he dreaded more the papal excommunication for the murder of the Cardinal of Guise, than the indignation of the people of France. His first attention was directed, not against "the League," but to deprecate the anger of the holy see; and after using every effort to mollify the papal legate, he dispatched the Bishop of Mans, as his embassador to Rome, in order to avert the ecclesiastical censures with which he was menaced from Sixtus the Fifth.[a]

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

A conduct so indolent and pusillanimous, was attended with the most pernicious effects. The castle of Orleans, destitute of the necessary garrison for its defence, surrendered to the besiegers; and that place, valuable from its position on the Loire, in the center of the kingdom, was lost by Henry's neglect. The royal army under the Duke of Nevers, infected with the general spirit of sedition and revolt, having disbanded, joined the enemy: while the Duke of Mayenne, who seemed at first irresolute and uncertain of the part which he should act; encouraged by the King's inaction, determined to revenge the death of his brothers. But it was in the capital that the most alarming events took place, on the arrival there of intelligence that the popular leaders had been assassinated. Apprehensive that their execution would form only a prelude to greater exertions of authority,

Pernicious effects resulting from it.

Emotions of the Parisians, on the Duke of Guise's death.

[a] Davila, p. 777. De Thou, vol. x. p. 483—485.

and

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

and that Henry would soon appear within the walls of Paris in person, at once to resume his prerogatives, and to punish the rebels who had insulted his lenity; the people betrayed scarcely any other emotions, except those of grief. Even the clergy, who had manifested the warmest devotion to the house of Guise, restrained the demonstrations of their sorrow; or contented themselves with deploring the tragical end of two princes, so illustrious for their public services and virtues. The parliament of Paris, composed of persons venerable from their age, their character, and judicial functions, was not inclined to adopt sentiments of a nature hostile to the repose of their country. Among the opulent classes of citizens in the metropolis, there existed every disposition to aid and support the crown, if they had in turn received from the sovereign, a natural and just protection. But when, instead of hearing that Henry was on his march to restore order, the inhabitants learned that he remained at Blois, in a state of indolent repose; and when they beheld the example of Orleans in their own vicinity, which ventured to resist with impunity the royal authority, they gave full scope to their rage and animosity. Having assembled tumultuously in the town-hall, they conferred the government of Paris on the Duke of Aumale; embraced the determination of sending immediate succours to the inhabitants of Orleans; and put the capital into a state of defence.

Fermentation and revolt in the capital.

The

The fermentation among the multitude, was sustained by the popular preachers, who, enraged at the murder of the Cardinal of Guise, confounded his punishment with the interests of the Catholic religion, of which they declared him the martyr, and branded their sovereign with the most opprobrious epithets. [b] CHAP. VIII. 1589.

While these symptoms of open rebellion displayed themselves in Paris, an event took place at Blois, which, however it may be lost among the turbulent and calamitous scenes presented on every side, at this period of Henry's reign, must forcibly attract the notice of the historian. Catherine of Medicis, at seventy years of age, during the last thirty of which she had directed in a greater or less degree, the affairs of France, expired, after a short illness of a few days. At the time of the Duke of Guise's assassination, she was already indisposed with the gout; and her emotions on receiving information of an event, to which she might be said in some measure to have contributed by the protection of the Guises, accelerated the progress of her disorder. Her judgment, ripened by long experience, enabled her to foresee, and to apprize the King, who, with marks of exultation informed her of the Duke's death; that only vigor and expedition could extricate him from the commotions, with which it must necessarily be followed thro'out the kingdom. Her malady

Death of Catherine of Medicis.

5th January.

[b] De Thou, vol. x. p. 485—490. Davila, p. 760—762.

redoubled

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

redoubled in consequence of the severe reproaches made her by the Cardinal of Bourbon, on her supposed participation in the violent measures adopted by her son; and the agitations of her mind aiding the attacks of disease, she survived only a short time. Few women have possessed a more enlarged capacity, or have acted so distinguished a part on the theatre of the world. The strength of her genius, aided by the acuteness of her talents, enabled her to acquire, and to retain an ascendant over her two sons, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, after their confidence in her had become totally extinct. Endowed with a masculine ambition, she despised the ordinary occupations, or frivolous amusements of her sex, and was only intent upon more solid objects. Magnificent, liberal, affable, and capable of the closest application to business, she was never overcome by the magnitude, nor distracted by the multiplicity of public affairs. Prodigal of human blood, faithless to her engagements, and regardless of the means by which she attained her ends, she was destitute of principles of rectitude. Continually employed in exciting the dissensions of the kingdom, in order to render her interference necessary for their suppression, she maintained her influence, at the expence of the national tranquillity and felicity. Mortified to behold her authority in a great measure subverted, by the favor to which Joyeuse and Epernon had attained; she had recourse to the Guises, in order to balance and preponde-

Character of that Princess.

rate the credit of Henry's minions. With that view she facilitated or supported the measures of "the League:" but her ability was unequal to extinguish the conflagration which she had kindled, and she saw before her death, the fatal effects of her inordinate thirst of power. Oppressed at once by age and by disease, reproached by those whom she had unintentionally precipitated on ruin, and no longer trusted by Henry himself; having outlived her influence, and involved her son, as well as the monarchy of France, in almost inextricable calamities; she might be esteemed fortunate in not surviving to witness the complete extinction of the house of Valois which impended, and the transfer of the crown to the line of Bourbon, which she had always hated and persecuted. [c]

CHAP. VIII.

1589. Support given by her to "the League."

The King performed her funeral with all the solemnity and magnificence, which the distressed situation of his affairs and finances would permit; but Catherine, who had attracted so much consideration during her life, was speedily forgotten after her decease. Inattentive to, and unaffected by the distracted condition of the kingdom, Henry continued at Blois, occupied in closing and finally dimissing the assembly of the States. He executed this function with the same tranquillity and complacency, which he would have exhibited in a

Dismission of the States General.

16th January.

[c] Davila, p. 755—757. De Thou, vol. x. p. 500—503. L'Etoile, p. 261—263. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 124—133.

time

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

time of profound internal repose; although every hour convinced him of the necessity of exerting his utmost efforts, in order to prevent the destruction impending over his crown and life. Previous to the dissolution of the assembly, he administered anew the oath by which he bound himself never to tolerate any religion, except the Catholic: but this proof of his zeal, only served to manifest his weakness, while it encouraged his enemies. Mendoza, the Spanish embassador, having already taken his departure from Blois, had repaired to Paris, in which city was concentered all the violence of "the League." Encouraged by Henry's feeble and dilatory proceedings, the inhabitants no longer observed any measures of respect towards him; and the spirit of revolt pervading all classes of society, the remaining barriers which opposed their progress, were soon totally overthrown. The college of the Sorbonne, a body of men whose decrees in theology were regarded in that age as sacred, when they were consulted by the people, in the names of the municipal magistrates, on the obligation of allegiance to the reigning sovereign; solemnly determined that the nation was freed from the oath of fidelity, and that arms might conscientiously be taken up against Henry, for the defence of religion. Such was the blind and furious attachment of the multitude to the Duke and Cardinal of Guise, that the great mass beheld in those princes, only their devotion to the Catholic faith; while they remained insensible to the acts of treason and rebellion, by which

Insurrection at Paris.

Decree of the college of the Sorbonne.

which both had merited and provoked their fate. From similar perversion of mind, a prince, whose principal crime consisted in his insurmountable indolence, and who had with difficulty been roused to a single act of vengeance, necessary for his own personal preservation; was stigmatized by his subjects, with the imputation of a sanguinary tyrant, delighting in the effusion of human blood. Louis the Sixteenth received the same treatment from the French people.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

Powerfully as the decree of the Sorbonne had operated, in exciting the populace to throw off subjection to the government, it would have been found ineffectual to produce their complete emancipation from all restraint, while the parliament of Paris continued to exercise its functions, and to retain its legal authority. It became therefore requisite to dissolve an assembly, whose presence and deliberations tended to keep alive a sense of duty and loyalty. Bussy le Clerc, a man whose audacity fitted him for the commission, undertook to arrest, and to conduct the refractory members to prison. Having surrounded the hall in which the parliament was met, and occupied all the avenues with his adherents; he entered, completely armed, into the great chamber, at the precise time when they were about to nominate deputies for the purpose of waiting upon the King, at Blois. He instantly began to read the list of the obnoxious and proscribed individuals, among whom were included the two presidents; when he was interrupted by the unanimous voice

Seizure, and imprisonment of the parliament.

16th January.

CHAP. VIII.

1589. They are conducted to the Bastile.

voice of the whole body, who declared their determination to follow their chiefs into confinement. Being conducted through the streets of the capital, accompanied by the lamentations and tears of the virtuous, or moderate part of the citizens, they were finally lodged in the Bastile. A new parliament, composed of persons more subservient, was speedily constituted by the insurgents; who proceeded to administer to them a solemn oath, in the name of the princes, cities, and states of France, binding them to maintain the union, and to pursue the vengeance due to the late assassinations. With the view of inflaming the passions of the people, a spectacle calculated to awaken their pity, was likewise exhibited; that of the Duchess of Guise, widow of the late Duke, who, habited in the deepest mourning, and accompanied by a train of weeping friends or relatives, presented a petition at the bar of the parliament, praying for redress against the authors of her husband's death. [d]

31st January.

Indecision of the Duke of Mayenne.

These important changes preceded the arrival of the Duke of Mayenne, who remained during a considerable time after his flight to Dijon, in a state of indecision as to his future conduct. The natural moderation of his temper, when added to the disapprobation which he had felt and expressed, at his brother's ambitious and criminal attempts, inclined him to listen to

[d] De Thou, vol. x. p. 511—520. Davila, p. 760—765. L'Etoile, p. 264—271. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 117—121. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 364—367.

the

the amicable propositions made him by Henry. But the exhortations of his sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, the invitation of the Parisians, the successful revolt of the city of Orleans, and the defenceless inactivity in which the King remained, at the moment which was to decide upon his greatest interests; — these considerations surmounted the reluctance of Mayenne. Quitting Burgundy, he repaired therefore to Orleans; was received into the city of Chartres, which declared for "the League;" and after confirming the adherence of his partizans, he arrived in the metropolis, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants.

1589.

His arrival at Paris.

15th February.

His presence, which diffused universal joy, was followed by events which gave the last blow to the expiring influence or authority of the crown. The Duke immediately constituted a council of the Union, composed of forty members, selected from among the clergy, nobility, magistrates, and citizens, for the supreme administration of all affairs; the separate jurisdiction of Paris being still vested in a council of sixteen. Obedience to the former assembly was enjoined on pain of death; and from their hands he soon afterwards received the investiture of his new office, denominated "Lieu- "tenant-general of the Royal State and Crown "of France." The term of its duration was limited to the convocation of the States General at Paris, in the following month of July; and the functions annexed to it, were precisely those naturally and legitimately vested in the sove-

18th Febuary.

4th March. He is constituted lieutenant-general of the crown.

CHAP. VIII.

1589. sovereign, whose person he was designed to represent. The Duke swore, at the ceremony of his induction, to maintain inviolate the purity of the Catholic faith, the privileges of the nobility and clergy, and the laws of the kingdom. He likewise promised, in order to attach the people to the cause, a diminution of the taxes, and protection from all violence or oppression.

Fury of the Parisians. This public act, by which Henry was virtually deposed, aided by the inflammatory discourses of the monks and preachers, carried the outrages of the Parisians to the last extremity. The populace, animated to a degree of frenzy, listened with implicit credulity to all the absurd, as well as monstrous fictions, invented to defame and traduce the King. In addition to the crimes of perfidy and assassination, were added the accusations of magic, impiety, and every species of profanation. He was no longer designated by any denomination except that of Henry of Valois; and it was solemnly proposed, after his deposition from the royal dignity, to imprison him during the remainder of his life, in the convent of the Hiéronimites, situate in the wood of Vincennes, there to expiate his past offences by penitence and prayer.[c]

Revolt of the kingdom. The powerful example of the metropolis, operated with incredible force upon the other cities of the kingdom, the greater number of which, openly embraced the party of the Duke of Mayenne. From the northern frontier of Pi-

[c] De Thou, vol. x. p. 525—529. Davila, p. 772—775.

cardy,

cardy, throughout the whole extent of France, to the gates of Marseilles, and the shore of the Mediterranean, scarcely a place of any strength or importance remained firm in its allegiance to the crown. Amiens and Abbeville, two cities, which as well from their magnitude, as from their position on the river Somme, were of the first consequence, joined "the League." Laön imitated their conduct; and Melun, the only town in the vicinity of Paris which had refused to submit to the rebels, was lost for want of assistance. Rouen, together with the whole of Upper Normandy, expelled the royal troops and governors. The mental contagion spread with irresistible rapidity. Chalons on the Marne, was the only city of Champagne which adhered to Henry; while Burgundy was completely in the interests of the Duke of Mayenne. Even the important and commercial city of Lyons could not be retained in its duty, by all the exertions of Ornano; and Provence exhibited similar proofs of disaffection. The inhabitants of Toulouse, capital of Upper Languedoc, after massacring with circumstances of uncommon ferocity, their first magistrates, renounced subjection to the King; and Narbonne followed the example. In the central and interior provinces, the defection became not less general. La Chatre, governor of Berri, induced the city of Bourges to revolt; and Mans was lost by the perfidy of Bois-Dauphin, one of the chiefs arrested by Henry, after the assassination of the Duke of Guise, and whom he had afterwards

CHAP. VIII. 1589

Rouen.

Lyons.

Toulouse.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

imprudently released upon the security of his parole. Clermont alone, of all the cities in Auvergne, refused to throw off its allegiance.

Brittany.

But, the defection of the Duke of Mercœur more deeply affected the King, as in addition to the government of Brittany, confided to him, he stood in the nearest degree of connexion to the crown, by Henry's marriage with his sister, Louisa of Vaudemont. Among so many calamities, and amidst so universal an insurrection, Matignon retained Bourdeaux in its obedience, though not without difficulty. Throughout Guyenne, Languedoc, and Dauphiné, with the single exception of Toulouse; from the numbers and predominance of the Hugonots in that portion of France, "the League" possessed little power, and few adherents. The course of the Loire, from the gates of Orleans, to those of Nantes, and the passages of that important river, were likewise principally occupied by the royalists; and Henry was still nominally obeyed in Tours, Saumur, and Angers. But these places constituted a very inconsiderable part of the French monarchy. [f]

Conduct of Sixtus the Fifth, towards the King.

Nor was the situation of that prince's affairs in the court of Rome, more favorable than the internal aspect of France. Sixtus the Fifth, naturally arrogant and irascible, desirous to profit of the anarchy of the kingdom, in order to extend the power and pretensions of the

[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 551—575. Davila, p. 765—768. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 139—148.

Holy

Holy See; and warmly solicited by the Spanish faction, who supported the Duke of Mayenne; pertinaciously refused to grant the King absolution for the assassinations committed by his orders. It was in vain that he attempted by submissions and protestations of devotion, to mollify the pontiff, who demanded, previous to his forgiveness, that the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Archbishop of Lyons should be set at liberty, and even transferred before the papal tribunal at Rome, there to be tried for their alledged offences. Sixtus, far from relaxing in his requisitions on these points, menaced the King with excommunication, and appeared to have embraced with ardor the interests of his enemies: nor could the intercession of the embassadors of Venice and Tuscany, who endeavoured to interpose in Henry's favour, prevail on the Pope to adopt a conduct more becoming the common father of the Christian world. [z] 1589.

Deplorable condition of Henry.

Oppressed at once by foreign and domestic calamities, the King's situation became every day more critical and desperate. "The League" was in possession of almost all his dominions; while the Hugonots, relieved from the pressure of the royal forces under the Duke of Nevers, and advancing rapidly towards the Loire, threatened to enclose him between two hostile armies. The exchequer was empty; the finances were drained or alienated; and he possessed no resources wherewith to supply the deficiency.

[z] Davila, p. 770—772. De Thou, vol. x. p. 330—550.

CHAP. VIII.

1589. His troops were neither numerous, nor could he rely on their attachment, in a moment of general desertion. The few places which still adhered to him, shaken by internal faction, appeared ready to revolt. Even his governors and commanders whom he most trusted, opened their gates to the enemy, or compelled him to purchase their precarious fidelity, by presents and rewards. Spain and Savoy were unquestionably hostile; while he dreaded to ask, or to receive assistance from Elizabeth, Queen of England, a protestant, the protectress of heresy. Mayenne, master of the capital, and at the head of a formidable military force, prepared to commence active war; nor could the contest apparently be either long or dubious. It was already agitated in Henry's council, to quit Blois, and to transport the court to Moulins, capital of the Bourbonnois. The condition of Charles the Seventh was not more deplorable, when the Maid of Orleans appeared, and re-established the monarchy of France. Under these circumstances, the King at length issued an edict, in which, after justifying the late acts of severity exercised against the Guises, as equally necessary, and provoked on their part, he commanded the rebels to return to their duty under the penalty of treason. In order to give some efficacy to the proclamation, he published a second edict, transferring the parliament of Paris, to Tours; in which latter city he fixed his residence, as being more secure from insult than Blois. His presence prevented the inhabitants

Edict issued by him.

5th March.

bitants from following the general example of defection; and Angers, which had already taken up arms against him, was retained in obedience by the firmness of Picheri, who commanded in the castle of the place. Henry having, on payment of a considerable sum to le Guast, the governor of Amboise, obtained from him the delivery of the prisoners confided to his care, removed them to different prisons in the vicinity. The Cardinal of Bourbon was confined at Chinon; the Duke of Elbeuf was transferred to Loches; and the young Duke of Guise was detained in the castle of Tours.[h]

1589.

Transfer of the prisoners from Amboise.

Notwithstanding these transitory exertions of vigor, aided by some advantages which the Count of Soissons, youngest of the sons of Louis, Prince of Condé, and himself a prince of the blood, obtained over the troops of "the League;" no solid hopes of success could be entertained, unless an accommodation took place with the King of Navarre. That event began already to be regarded as probable, if not imminent; and necessity strongly dictated the measure. The Count of Soissons, whose descent from the royal line, rendered him deeply interested in effecting the reconciliation, and whose attachment to the Catholic religion was unquestionable, urged its expediency. Even the most bigotted servants of Henry, conscious of the danger which approached, and aware of Mayenne's superiority in force, admitted that no other mode of ex-

Necessity of an accommodation with the King of Navarre.

[h] De Thou, vol. x. p. 575—583. Davila, p. 787 and 788.

CHAP. VIII.

1589. Enlarged policy, and conduct of that prince.

trication could be devised. The conduct of the King of Navarre himself, above all tended to facilitate a re-union. As his troops advanced through Poitou, and made themselves successively masters of various places which surrendered, he prevented any insult or injury from being offered to the Catholics; respected their civil and ecclesiastical rights; and only restored to the Protestants the freedom of religious worship, previously enjoyed by the edicts of toleration which Henry had repeatedly issued in their favor. In addition to so beneficent and moderate a treatment of his enemies, he published a Manifesto, dated at Chatelheraud in Poitou, calculated to awaken the loyalty, while it conciliated the esteem and affection of every man, who retained any sentiments of patriotism, or of public spirit. After deploring the calamities of their common country, and reprobating the traitors, who under the mask of religion, had thrown off all subjection to their sovereign, he declared perpetual war and irreconcilable enmity with the adherents of "the League." He concluded by beseeching of Henry to receive him again into favor; and protested in terms the most solemn, that whatever places should submit themselves either to the King, or to himself, he would maintain the inhabitants in the undisturbed enjoyment of all their privileges, peculiarly in liberty of conscience.[i]

4th March. His Manifesto.

[i] De Thou, vol. x. p. 584—588. Davila, p. 785. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 159—165.

So

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

So many concurring inducements at length overcame the King's repugnance, and he consented to open a negotiation. It was facilitated and accelerated by the interposition of Diana de Valois, Countess of Angouleme, natural daughter of Henry the Second; a princess whose intellectual endowments were equalled by the noble enlargement of her views, and her anxiety for the national welfare. The conditions of the treaty were speedily adjusted, the King of Navarre demanding only a place on the Loire, for the security of his retreat; and consenting, after that cession, to join the royal army with his own forces, amounting to two thousand foot, and twelve hundred cavalry. On the basis of these stipulations, a truce was concluded for one year, between the two princes; and after some delays, Saumur, which constituted one of the most eligible and commodious passages across the Loire, was ceded to the King of Navarre. Yet at the moment of signing a convention so advantageous to himself, Henry, actuated by his terrors of the Papal indignation, by his detestation of the Hugonots, and by his anxiety to obtain peace on almost any conditions, commenced a negotiation with Mayenne. He even authorized the Legate to offer the Duke, the most satisfactory terms, together with ample gratifications for all the princes of Lorrain, and the heads of "the League." But Mayenne, elated by the flattering aspect of his affairs, and secure of the protection of the Court of Rome, rejected

Negotiation between the two kings.

3d April.

Treaty concluded.

Treatment of Henry, by Mayenne.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

jected with disdain, all proposals of accommodation. He accompanied the refusal, with expressions of contempt and aversion for Henry, whom he no longer addressed as his sovereign, or affected to regard as King of France.

Truce.

Irritated at so insulting a treatment, and conscious that no hopes were to be entertained of reconciliation with his enemies, Henry consented to the publication of the truce concluded between him and the King of Navarre. It had been preceded by a similar suspension of hostilities between Ornano and Lesdiguieres, in Dauphiné, as the respective chiefs of the Catholic and Hugonot armies. [k]

Violence of the Parisians.

The intelligence of a treaty having been concluded with the Protestants, and the consequent reconciliation effected between the kings of France and Navarre, when it became known at Paris, carried the rage of its inhabitants to the utmost height. Libels, calumnies, and every kind of outrage were circulated or permitted, by which a furious and misguided populace could express their impotent resentment: while the Duchess of Montpensier sustained their courage, by issuing false or exaggerated accounts of pretended victories obtained over the royal forces. But, Henry appeared far less sensible to these demonstrations of the enmity of his own subjects, than to the effects of the Papal censures. Sixtus, convinced that the affairs of the crown were desperate, incensed at the

Admonition issued by Sixtus.

[k] De Thou, vol. x. p. 589—593. Davila, p. 786—790. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 379—381. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 174—181.

King's

King's refusal to liberate the two prisoners, for whose freedom he had solicited, and yielding to the importunities of Mayenne's agents; issued an admonition, enjoining Henry to set at liberty in ten days, both the Cardinal of Bourbon, and the Archbishop of Lyons. On failure of obedience to this mandate, the Pope declared him excommunicated, as well as all his adherents; and cited him to appear in person, or by his representative, before the tribunal of the Holy See, within the space of two months. The Italian powers, particularly Ferdinand the First, Great Duke of Tuscany, and the republic of Venice, deeply sensible to so insolent a display of the pontifical authority, warmly exhorted the King to resent, and to punish the affront. Ferdinand, whose descent from the House of Medicis interested him in Henry's preservation, in addition to this generous and high-spirited advice, assisted him with a very considerable loan of money, which enabled him to make new exertions, and to set on foot levies of troops, within, and without his dominions. On the contrary, Sixtus, satisfied with having anathematized him at the suggestion of "the League," refused to open the treasury of St. Peter, or to aid Mayenne with the smallest pecuniary contribution.[p]

CHAP. VIII.

1589. 24th May.

The personal interview between the two princes, which had been too long delayed by

Interview of Plessiz les Tours.

[p] Davila, p. 810 and 811. De Thou, vol. x. p. 594—600 and 603—614.

the

CHAP. VIII. 1589. 30th April.

the scruples or apprehensions of Henry, took place at length, in the park of the castle of Plessiz, near the city of Tours, amidst an incredible assemblage of people, who rent the air with acclamations. The King of Navarre, after rejecting the cautious and timid advice of those who opposed his trusting to the honor of Henry, quitted his army, and advanced to throw himself at his sovereign's feet. He was received by that monarch as he merited, with demonstrations of extraordinary regard and affection. They embraced, exhibited marks of the most cordial reconciliation, and proceeded to concert measures for the vigorous prosecution of a war, on the success of which depended their common safety. The King of Navarre completed his first impression, by returning, accompanied only with a single page, on the following morning, in order to prove his unbounded confidence in Henry's good faith and sincerity [m]. If we reflect how few years had elapsed since the massacre of Paris, in which scene of treachery and carnage that Prince had personally acted so distinguished a part; and if we further consider, that it constituted a maxim among the bigotted adherents of the Romish religion, in the period of time under our review, that faith was not to be observed with heretics; we shall know how to appreciate, and to admire, the magnanimity of the King of Navarre, thro'out this whole proceeding.

[m] De Thou, vol. x. p. 618—622. Davila, p. 800. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 185 and 186.

Roused

CHAP. VIII.

Roused from his habitual indolence, by so many incentives to action, the King dispatched Sancy with instructions to levy ten thousand infantry among the Swiss Cantons; and sent Schomberg on a similar commission, into the German empire, to raise a body of cavalry. The war had already been commenced in Normandy, where the Duke of Montpensier, at the head of the royal forces, obtained a decisive victory over the *Gautiers;* a community of unfortunate peasants, who having been driven by feudal oppression to take up arms against their rulers, had been seduced to join the party of "the League." Being surrounded and repeatedly attacked, they were either indiscriminately put to the sword, or compelled to surrender at discretion. A prodigious carnage was made among them; and the survivors gladly accepted their lives, on condition of returning to their original occupation. An event so fortunate taking place at the commencement of hostilities, inspired the royalists with courage; and Henry's army was augmented by the arrival of the Duke of Epernon, who at this critical period brought his master a supply of twelve hundred troops, levied in Guienne. The King of Navarre having returned to his own camp after the late interview, began likewise his march towards Tours, at the head of the Hugonot forces; and it was already in agitation to advance with the allied armies, towards the capital of France.[n]

1589. Exertions of Henry.

Defeat of the Gautiers.

22d April.

[n] Davila, p. 794—799. De Thou, vol. x. p. 600—603. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 182 and 183.

During

CHAP. VIII.

1589. 8th April. Military operations of Mayenne.

During the progress of these events, the Duke of Mayenne, with a numerous and well appointed army under his command, having quitted Paris, marched to Vendome; the governor of which city, by an act of the basest treachery, received him immediately into the place. The Archbishop of Lyons, who was confined in the castle of Amboise, found means to convey to him information, that the Count of Brienne, with a considerable body of Epernon's cavalry, lay dispersed in a state of negligence and security, not far from Blois. Mayenne, profiting of the intelligence, attacked him without delay, cut in pieces a great number of his troops, and made Brienne himself prisoner. Encouraged by so prosperous a beginning, and being informed that Henry could not be regarded as secure in the position which he occupied at Tours; the Duke resolved to make an attempt upon his quarters, before the junction of the Hugonots should render him too formidable for such an experiment. Arriving unexpectedly in the suburbs, after a forced march, his advanced body of horse had nearly captured the King; who, totally unapprehensive of any danger, had rode out, accompanied only by a few officers, with an intention to reconnoitre, and to fortify the post. If the general of "the "League" had instantly availed himself of the surprize occasioned by his appearance, and had assailed the royal forces on every side, it is more than probable that he might have obtained a decisive victory: nor did he want ad-

29th April.

8th May. Attack of the suburbs of Tours.

herents within the city itself, who in such a case would have risen in his favour, and completed the confusion. But, the characteristic caution and prudence of Mayenne, which rendered him averse to hazardous operations, allowed his opponents time for making a vigorous defence. CHAP. VIII. 1589.

Courage displayed by Henry.

Henry on this occasion proved to his subjects, that however his mind had been enervated by indolence and habits of effeminacy, he was not destitute either of personal courage, or of military capacity. Although unarmed, and unprepared for action, he betrayed no agitation; issued his orders with composure, and was every where present. During the subsequent part of the engagement, as the event seemed dubious, and might prove unfortunate; his judicious directions repressed the intemperate ardor of the nobility, controuled the seditious spirit of the inhabitants, and were highly instrumental towards rendering ineffectual the designs of the enemy. The royal troops, animated by the presence and exertions of their sovereign, behaved with incredible bravery, under manifest disadvantages of number and situation. But Mayenne, master of an eminence, from whence his artillery played upon the suburbs, and supplying with fresh soldiers, the places of those who fell; towards evening completely gained possession of the post, notwithstanding the desperate resistance made by Chatillon, who arrived with the vanguard of the Hugonots. The two armies remained opposite

CHAP. VIII.

posite each other, during the whole night; fully prepared to renew the contest on the ensuing day, if Mayenne, apprehensive of the approach of the King of Navarre in person with all his forces, had not decamped early in the morning, and taken the road towards Mans. He was pursued by a body of the royal cavalry; and towards noon, the arrival of the King of Navarre at Tours, diffused universal confidence. Henry received him as the best support of his future hopes and operations; committed to his charge the conduct of the army; and ordered him to march forward to the town of Beaugency on the Loire.°

1589. Mayenne decamps.

The nobility assist the King.

On the intelligence of the Duke of Mayenne's retreat, the French nobility, who had regarded Henry's situation and affairs as desperate, finding that he was still able to make so vigorous a defence, flocked in great numbers to the royal standard. The revolt of the city of Poitiers, which declared at this time for "the League," however to be regretted, was over-balanced by the success, which in other parts of the kingdom attended him: only energy on the part of the sovereign seemed wanting, to secure a prompt and happy termination of the war. Senlis, a city situate in the vicinity of Paris, having returned to its allegiance, and called in Thoré, brother to the Marshal Montmorenci; was soon afterwards besieged by the Duke of Aumale, at the head of a numerous force, principally collected from

17th May.

Siege of Senlis.

° De Thou, vol. x. p. 622—628. Davila, p. 799—805. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 186—189. Sully's Memoirs, folio edition, vol. i. p. 65 and 66. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 386—388.

among

among the inhabitants of the metropolis. He had been joined under the walls, by Balagny, governor of Cambray, with four thousand troops; and the place was reduced to the utmost extremities. In these circumstances, the Duke of Longueville, aided by the celebrated La Noue, a Hugonot commander who had acquired a high reputation during the civil wars of France, did not hesitate to attack the Leaguers, though inferior to them in numbers, artillery, and every preparation. They obtained a decisive victory; cut to pieces twelve hundred of the besiegers, and obliged Aumale to seek his safety in a precipitate flight. Senlis was not only relieved; but, the victorious royalists pursuing their advantage, threw supplies of provisions into the castle of Vincennes which held out for the crown, and even fired some vollies of cannon against Paris itself. On the other hand, Chatillon, at the head of a body of cavalry, was not less successful in a rencounter with Saveuse and La Brosse, two adherents of "the League," whom he charged and defeated near Bonneval, in the province of Chartres. Both the chiefs perished in the action, together with above a hundred of the nobility of Picardy. [p]

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

17th May. Victory of the royalists.

18th May. Subsequent advantages.

Such was the alarm occasioned in the metropolis, by the disaster before Senlis, and so dejected were the boldest partizans of the family of Guise, that the council of the Union having

Alarm at Paris.

[p] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 204—212. De Thou, vol. x. p. 632—643. Davila, p. 805—808, and 810. Sully, vol. i. p. 66. L'Etoile, p. 280.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

met, determined instantly to solicit the return of Mayenne. The Duchess of Montpensier, who personally despised the Duke of Aumale, and whose contempt was augmented by his recent defeat; urged her brother not to lose a moment in re-assuring the fickle and terrified inhabitants of the capital. That general, after his ill success before Tours, had made himself master of Alenson in Normandy; but he no sooner received the intelligence of La Noue's victory, together with the messengers from Paris, than he bent thither his march. His appearance appeased, though it did not extinguish, the popular emotion, and he prepared for a vigorous opposition. But the tide of fortune appeared to have rapidly turned in favor of the crown; and Henry, after experiencing all its rigor, seemed to be on the point of resuming his nearly extinct prerogatives. No effective impediment was interposed to the progress of his forces, who successively stormed the few places that ventured on resistance. At Estampes, which was taken by assault, the King, irritated at the pertinacity of his rebellious subjects, abandoned the city to pillage, and caused the magistrates to be immediately executed. As if to augment his satisfaction, Sancy, whom he had dispatched to levy an army in Switzerland, succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. That faithful and zealous minister not only induced the Cantons to aid him with troops; but he obtained from them a supply of money, still more essential in

22d May.

Return of Mayenne to the capital.

Rapid progress of the royal army.

in the distressed condition of his sovereign's finances. After having carried an offensive war into the dominions of the Duke of Savoy, in retaliation for his invasion and capture of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, Sancy conducted the Swiss and German forces into Burgundy. Near Langres in that province, La Noue and the Duke of Longueville, by Henry's orders met him, in order to superintend and direct his march towards Paris, the point of general union. So many fortunate events were checquered, but in no degree counterbalanced, by the ill success of the Count of Soissons; who having been sent to command in Brittany, was surprized, defeated, and made prisoner, by the Duke of Mercœur, governor of the province, at Chateau Giron near Rennes. [q]

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

Military operations.

The King advancing rapidly towards the capital, unopposed by any enemy, was joined at Poissy on the Seine, by Montpensier, at the head of a considerable body of men, from Normandy. With a view of reducing Paris to experience the distresses of famine, he laid siege to Pontoise, which surrendered after a brave and obstinate defence. On the following day, Sancy having redoubled his speed, in order to arrive in the royal camp, passed the bridge of Poissy, with his numerous army, amounting to near ten thousand Switzers, two thousand German infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry of

July.

24th July. Capture of Pontiose.

Arrival of the Swiss auxiliaries.

[q] De Thou, vol. x. p. 614—661. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 213—220. Davila, p. 808—812. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 176—180.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

the same nation. They were reviewed by Henry in person, who publickly returned his acknowledgments to their commander, for so signal a service, rendered still more important by the critical emergency in which it was performed. The troops of "the League" were driven from St. Cloud, by the impetuosity of the royalists; and the pass which that village commanded on the Seine, being immediately occupied by the King in person, who established there his head-quarters, Paris began to be closely invested on every side. His forces exceeded thirty thousand in number, elated by success, and emulous of displaying their fidelity and courage. On the contrary, the affairs of Mayenne were declining, and nearly desperate. His troops scarcely amounted to eight thousand foot, and about eighteen hundred horse, diminishing hourly and rapidly in consequence of famine, discontent, and scarcity of subsistence. The succours which the Dukes of Lorrain and Nemours had undertaken to conduct to his assistance, were distant, and could not avert the immediate danger. Mayenne himself, who had quartered his soldiers in the suburbs of the capital, vainly endeavoured to restore tranquillity, and to allay the terrors of the inhabitants. There were besides in the city, a number of persons well affected to the royal cause, who only waited a favorable moment to declare, and to exert themselves in its behalf. All the exhortations of the Duchesses of Guise, Nemours, and Montpensier, became ineffectual

Henry approaches Paris. 29th July.

State of Mayenne.

Danger, and consternation

effectual to sustain the courage of the Parisians, under the apprehension of a punishment imminent and severe. It was generally known that Henry, rendered inexorable by the insolence and atrocity of their conduct, had declared his determination to exact a cruel and memorable atonement, which might impress his rebellious subjects with awe, throughout the kingdom. Every measure was already taken for a general assault, the success of which could scarcely be doubtful. Mayenne, with a generous, though probably ineffectual despair, had embraced the resolution of putting himself at the head of four thousand of his choicest troops, devoted to death; of charging the enemy, and either cutting his way through them, or perishing on the field of battle. No situation could seem more hopeless than that of "the League," nor any triumph more apparently assured than that of Henry; when one of those events which mock all calculation, and decide the fate of nations, deprived the King of his crown and life, at the same time that it extricated Mayenne from manifest, and almost inevitable destruction.[r]

CHAP. VIII. 1589. of the capital.

A Monk, scarcely twenty-three years old, of the Dominican order, by name James Clement, was the instrument of so extraordinary and important a revolution. Naturally ferocious, gloomy, and capable of projecting the most daring enterprize, he possessed the intrepidity and coolness requisite for its execution. Dis-

History of Clement.

[r] Davila, p. 812—815. De Thou, vol. x. p. 661—666.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

solute, ignorant, and easily excited to commit any act, however immoral or atrocious, when encouraged by the exhortations of his superiors; he undertook, at the suggestion, and with the approbation of Bourgoing, the prior of his convent, to assassinate the King. Every artifice which cunning can practise upon credulity and fanaticism, was used to sustain, and to inflame his purpose. Not only earthly rewards and honors, but, a celestial recompence was assured to the champion and the martyr of the Holy Union. The Duchess of Montpensier, menaced by Henry with the most exemplary and ignominious punishment, as soon as he should become master of Paris, is even said to have made sacrifices, calculated to animate a depraved and sensual Monk, and to stimulate him to the perpetration of any crime, however flagitious. The manners of that age, which blended the extremes of profligacy, with the observances of superstition; when added to the magnitude of the impending evil, render it highly probable that Clement was encouraged to the attempt by her, as well as by the Duke of Mayenne himself. It is incontestable that he was provided with letters of introduction, by the president of the parliament of Paris, Harlai, then a prisoner in the Bastile; and by the Count of Brienne, who was detained a captive in the Louvre. Those zealous adherents of the crown, imposed on by his assurances of loyalty, and his desire to repair with important intelligence, to the royal

He undertakes to assassinate Henry.

royal camp, furnished him with the necessary credentials to procure him admission. CHAP. VIII. 1589.

The Monk immediately quitted Paris, and being soon stopped by the advanced guards, was conducted to La Guesle, the Solicitor-general. As he professed to be charged with a message to the King, of the most confidential nature; it being too late to procure him an audience on the same evening, he remained with La Guesle, supped heartily, and during the night slept with perfect composure. Henry had received so many, and such recent intimations, of persons being employed to assassinate him; that it would have been difficult, if not impracticable, for any man except an ecclesiastic, to have procured access to him, without such previous precautions as would probably have led to the discovery of the attempt. But, his predilection for all individuals of the monastic order, which exceeded belief, laid him open to the snare; a circumstance, of which Clement's instigators were unquestionably well apprized. On the ensuing morning, at an early hour, when the King was still undressed, Clement was brought into his presence; and having presented the letter from the Count of Brienne, while Henry was attentively occupied in perusing it, the Monk took a knife from his sleeve, and with incredible quickness plunged it into his belly. Feeling himself wounded, the King instantly drew out the weapon, with which he struck his assassin upon the forehead.

31st July. He arrives in the royal camp.

1st August. Assassination of the King.

CHAP. VIII.

1589. Circumstances accompanying it.

La Guesle, Lognac, and Mirepoix, who were present, not masters, as they asserted, of their indignation and horror, at the sight of their sovereign bleeding, and as they imagined, expiring; fell upon the Monk with their swords, and put him to death. His body was thrown out of the window, burnt by the soldiers, and his ashes scattered in the Seine[s]. However pure might be the intentions of the individuals, who sacrificed Clement to the first impulse of their rage; it is evident that by thus rendering it impossible to discover the concealed instigators of the crime, and by drawing over it an impenetrable veil, they in effect rendered the most important service to the cause of "the League."

Death of Henry.

Henry's wound, though from its nature alarming, did not on the first inspection, appear to be mortal. But, when the surgeons having examined it anew, had ascertained that the bowels were pierced, they announced to him his certain and inevitable dissolution. He received the information with calmness, ordered the doors of his apartment to be thrown open in order to admit the nobility, and prepared with resignation for his approaching end. Having repeatedly embraced the King of Navarre, whom he conjured, as well as advised, to embrace the Catholic religion, if he ever hoped to reign over the French; he declared that Prince to be his only legimate successor in the

[s] De Thou, vol. x. p. 667—671. Davila, p. 815—817.

throne.

throne. As such, he exhorted the officers and nobles who surrounded his bed, to regard him in the light of their future sovereign, notwithstanding his difference of religious persuasion. He expressed his deep concern at the unfortunate condition in which he left the kingdom, performed, with marks of penitence and piety, the ceremonies enjoined by the Romish church for persons in his situation, and expired on the following day. By his Queen, Louisa of Vaudemont, he left no issue; and at the time of his decease, he had not quite completed his thirty-eighth year, of which he had reigned above fifteen. His body, embalmed with as much decorum as the circumstances of the time would permit, was carried to Compiegne; and Benoise, one of his few faithful servants, interred his heart and his entrails privately, in the church of St. Cloud. [t]

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

His exhortations, and commands.

2d August.

The character of Henry the Third is strikingly pourtrayed, and faithfully delineated, in the events of his reign. No prince ever excited greater and more universal expectation, before he succeeded to the crown: none ever more completely disappointed the hopes entertained of his capacity and conduct. The lustre of his victories at Jarnac and Montcontour, where he nominally commanded the armies of

Character of Henry.

[s] De Thou, vol. x. p. 667—671. Davila, p. 815—817.

[t] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 220—224. L'Etoile, p. 284—286, and 289—300. Sully, vol. i. p. 67 and 68. Chiverni, vol. i. p. 140—143. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 394—398. De Thou, vol. x. p. 671—674. Davila, p. 817—819. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 180—183.

Charles

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

Charles the Ninth, against the Hugonots; by diffusing his reputation throughout all Europe, facilitated his election to the throne of Poland. But he was scarcely arrived in that country, when the death of his brother induced him to fly from his new capital, with circumstances of precipitation unbecoming his dignity, and injurious to his fame. Before he reached the frontiers of his hereditary dominions, his improvident liberality had already diminished the possessions, and contracted the territories of France, by the donation of Pignerol and Savillan to Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. Instead of extinguishing the civil wars, and dispensing peace to all his subjects upon his return, as sound policy dictated; the pernicious counsels of his mother, and of his interested or perfidious ministers, impelled him to persecute the Hugonots, who only demanded toleration and protection. Convinced nevertheless by experience, of the impossibility of tyrannizing over the conscience, or of reducing the Protestants by the sword, he adopted more enlarged and humane maxims of government: the edict of Poitiers, which restored tranquillity, was peculiarly his own measure, and as such was always cherished by him. But, the Guises, whom Henry studiously depressed, mortified at the diminution of power and consideration which they had enjoyed under the three preceding reigns; and incensed to see the elevation of favorites and minions to the highest offices of trust or dignity; counteracted his designs. In order

His inclination to toleration.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

order to do it with effect, they knew that religion must be made the mask for concealing and advancing their schemes of personal ambition. The King, notwithstanding his disinclination to war, was reluctantly compelled to violate his engagements, to rescind his edicts, and even to become eventually the instrument of his own humiliation.

Violence, exercised over him by "the "League."

Guise having rendered himself master of the metropolis, drove his sovereign from thence; dictated the conditions upon which he consented to a reconciliation; and insulted the monarch, whom he had previously disarmed. Yet, such was the passive and indolent temper of Henry, and so rooted was his antipathy to the Hugonots; that if Guise had not proceeded to acts, which left no doubt of his intention to usurp the whole effective authority of the crown, and even to depose his sovereign, the King would probably never have resisted. A rebellion became the consequence; not so much however of the assassination of the Guises, as of the inactive security which followed on the part of Henry; and the insurrection produced, by a necessary train of events, his reconciliation with the King of Navarre. At the moment when he justly anticipated the reduction of Paris, he perished by the hand of a private and obscure individual, whose monastic order he had always protected and favoured. Throughout his whole life, he seems to have cherished those who betrayed or outraged him; and he was destined to experience the most cruel injuries, from the hands of his nearest connexions.

Fatality and imprudence of his attachments.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

nexions. Joyeuse, whom he had raised to the highest point of power and greatness, deserted his benefactor, to join "the League." His brother-in-law, the Duke of Mercœur, revolted, notwithstanding the distinguished favors received from the crown; and that prince even attempted to render himself independant in the province of Brittany, of which he was governor. Catherine of Medicis, his mother, with a view to balance the credit of the minions who had supplanted her, secretly instigated and encouraged the princes of Lorrain, in their treasonable projects of aggrandizement. Even his own Queen, a princess of irreproachable manners, but of a narrow mind, and a bigotted, as well as melancholy disposition, was seduced to espouse the interests of her family, rather than the cause of her husband.

Endowments, and vices of Henry.

Henry, notwithstanding the defects of his character, possessed many amiable qualities, and some great endowments. To a graceful and majestic person, he added suavity of manners, affability, liberality, clemency, the love of justice, courage, and temperance. But all his virtues degenerated into vices, or were enervated by indolence and pleasure to such a degree, as to call in question their very existence. His munificence, which became profusion, ceased to attach those who were the objects of it, because they attributed his benefits more to natural facility and prodigality, than to real generosity. He degraded the majesty of his high rank, and almost rendered questionable the sa-

nity of his understanding, by his puerile or unbecoming associations with Monks and Penitents. Far from producing the effect which he intended, of acquiring popularity, from his zeal for the Catholic faith and institutions, such a conduct completed his ruin. Like James the First of England, his indecorous partiality to favorites, rendered him liable to suspicions and imputations the most dishonoring in their nature, as well as in their effects. Joyeuse and Epernon, the minions of the French monarch, remind us of Carr and Villiers, better known as Rochester and Buckingham, under the Scottish King. The same qualities, youth, personal graces, and external accomplishments, sufficed to produce their elevation in both courts. Henry's dissipation necessitated him to have recourse to the most fatal expedients, in order to maintain his state, and to fill the exhausted treasury. The venality of charges, multiplication of offices, and accumulation of taxes, having at length undermined the foundations on which rested his throne, enabled his enemies to atchieve their pernicious purposes. At his decease he left the monarchy convulsed, and nearly overthrown: it required the talents, heroism, and good fortune of Henry the Fourth, to restore it, and to disperse the chaos into which the mal-administration of his predecessor, had plunged the kingdom. The circumstances in which he expired, and the atrocity of the crime that produced his death, rendered him in some degree regretted; as it seemed to expiate or obliterate the series of errors,

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

State of France at his decease.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

errors, faults, and vices, which render his reign one of the most melancholy and calamitous portions of modern history. [u]

Parallel between Henry the Third, and Louis the Sixteenth.

The coincidence between Henry the Third and Louis the Sixteenth, is so striking in many particulars, as to arrest and impress the least reflecting mind. Never, indeed, were two princes more dissimilar in the great points of moral character. The one, dissolute, enervate, and destitute of principle, or of virtue. The other, exemplary in the discharge of his private as well as of his public duties. But, their resemblance on a single article, namely, the supine acquiescence under popular innovation, plunged them both into remediless ruin. The profligate indolence of Henry, and the inert or sluggish inaptitude of Louis, who, each, allowed insurrection to organize itself, without exerting any adequate effort for its coercion or suppression, produced the same results. Both monarchs acceded to the throne, in the bloom of youth. Henry, at twenty-two: Louis, at a still earlier period of life; the one in 1574: the other, in 1774. Each reigned nearly the same number of years, fifteen. For though the unfortunate Louis *survived* down to 1793, he cannot be said to have *reigned* beyond 1789. Like Charles the First, whose *reign* terminates with his surrender to the Scottish army in 1646., though his *life* was prolonged down to 1649.

[u] De Thou, vol. x. p. 674—678. Davila, p. 820.

CHAP. VIII.

The two Kings remained alike passive spectators of the gathering national convulsion, during several years. Henry, after his brother's decease in 1584, till 1589. Louis, precisely the same space of time, between the termination of the American war, and the fatal era of the French revolution. Both lost possession of the capital, by not retaining the Bastile; which fortress, if Henry had entrusted to Ornano, or if Louis had provided with an adequate garrison and the requisite means of defence, would not in either case have fallen into the hands of the insurgents. Each sovereign was besieged in his own palace: the former, in the Louvre; the latter, in the Tuilleries. They alike fell by a violent death, at thirty-eight: one by the knife of an assassin; The other, under the axe of the guillotine; leaving their dominions in a state of rebellion, approaching to anarchy. 1589.

Contrast between the late princes.

Both princes convoked in their distress, the States general of France; and both fled from their respective palaces. But here, the parallel terminates. For, Henry, though he assembled the representatives of the nation, did not allow them to assume all the prerogatives of the crown, and then to transfer him to the scaffold, like his feeble successor. Nor did he remain in the Louvre, as Louis continued at Versailles, in October, 1789, to be conducted thence a prisoner by his own subjects, dishonored, and virtually dethroned. The last of the Valois race, however degenerate and effeminate he might

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

might be in his ordinary character, could exert under circumstances of imperious necessity, an energy and activity capable of extricating him from the worst extremities of fallen majesty. But, the last of the Bourbons seemed to make no effort for redeeming his usurped rights, or for stemming the current of insurrection and Jacobinism. Henry, when driven beyond the bounds of patience, assassinated his rebellious and treasonable subject. Louis neither arrested, nor brought to trial the Duke of Orleans; the Guise of the eighteenth century, though endowed with very inferior talents to his prototype. On the extinction of the family of Valois, France, though in a state of universal rebellion, yet, from the exertions of its sovereign, however tardy, was on the point of being reduced into submission to the royal authority. At the subversion of the Bourbon line, the sceptre was broken; and many years of sanguinary anarchy, civil war, and foreign conquest, intervened, before its scattered fragments were collected and reunited, in the person of the ruthless and flagitious tyrant, denominated Emperor of the French.

Retrospect of the reigns of the princes of Valois.

In Henry's person expired the royal branch of Valois, which under thirteen kings, had reigned over the French nation, during the space of two hundred and sixty-one years. With the single exception of Philip of Valois himself, source of the line, they were in general distinguished by their love and protection of letters.

Virtues.

Charles the Fifth, in profound policy, and the arts

arts of government; Louis the Twelfth, in paternal affection for his people; and Francis the First, in magnanimity, elevation of mind, and cultivation of the fine arts; have not yielded to any monarchs, of any period, antient or modern. Personal courage seems to have been hereditary among them; tho' its peculiar and characteristic quality might be varied in different princes. It was rash and impetuous, in Philip and John; subdued to the dictates of caution and prudence, in Charles the Fifth, and Louis the Eleventh; unequal, tho' brilliant, in Charles the Seventh; adventurous and splendid in Charles the Eighth; steady and temperate in Louis the Twelfth; heroic, and partaking of the spirit of chivalry, in Francis the First; ferocious in Charles the Ninth; indolent and often eclipsed in Henry the Third. CHAP. VIII. 1589.

Their virtues were swallowed up by their superior vices and misfortunes, as a great historian of our own country has observed in speaking of the Plantagenets, who reigned so long over the English. Two of the number, John and Francis, taken prisoners in the field of battle, at Poitiers and at Pavia, were conducted as captives to London, and to Madrid. It would be difficult to parallel the reigns of Charles the Sixth, of Charles the Ninth, and of Henry the Third, in every species of misfortune, resulting from civil and religious anarchy. Even the most prosperous and tranquil periods were clouded by intestine commotions, or stained by cruelty and tyranny. If neither of these descriptions will Vices and misfortunes.

CHAP. VIII.

1589.

apply to the mild administration of Louis the Twelfth, yet that beneficent reign, short in its duration, was marked by continual foreign war, and the greatest national disgraces, losses, or reverses. Louis the Eleventh stands nearly alone, in the list of monsters who have trampled upon the rights of humanity; and the superiority of his talents, employed for purposes of oppression or destruction, like those of Tiberius in antiquity, only renders him more conspicuously an object of detestation.

Progressive aggrandizement of France.

Neither their defects of character, fortune, nor administration, were however such as to prevent the gradual and progressive augmentation of the grandeur, power, and dominions of France. Philip of Valois, imprudent or unfortunate as he was in war, yet obtained by address and purchase, the important province of Dauphiné, with all its dependancies, forming a barrier on the side of Savoy. His grandson, Charles the Fifth, unquestionably the most able prince of the Capetian dynasty, restored the monarchy, which had been convulsed, dismembered, and almost subverted by the arms of Edward the Third, and of his son the Black Prince. To the valor and good conduct of Charles the Seventh, was due the final expulsion of the English from the kingdom, of which they previously occupied so considerable a portion. Louis the Eleventh, tho' he lost Artois and the Netherlands by his vindictive policy, added the rich acquisition of Burgundy by conquest, on the death of Charles the Bold; as he obtained

obtained Provence by bequest or donation, at the decease of Charles the Third, last prince of the Angevin race, who descended from John, King of France. Brittany, last of the great fiefs, was acquired by the marriage of Charles the Eighth with Anne, heiress of that Duchy; confirmed by Louis the Twelfth's subsequent nuptials with the same Princess; and finally incorporated into the monarchy, by Francis the First. The extinction of the house of Valois, followed by the elevation of the family of Bourbon to the throne, forms a great and interesting era in the history of France.

CHAP. VIII. 1589.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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